

# Southend Rugby Football Club

## Safeguarding Policy, Procedure, Guidance & Advice Document



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# Section One

## Foreword

Southend Rugby Football Club (SRFC) is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all vulnerable adults, children and young people (players) and we acknowledge our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all those involved with our rugby club from potential harm.

We adhere to the Rugby Football Union's Safeguarding Policy guidance and procedures actively endorse and adopt the policy statement contained within that document.

This policy is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All participants regardless of age, gender, ability or disability, race, faith, size, language or sexual identity, have the right to protection from harm.
- All allegations, suspicions of harm and concerns will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately.
- Everyone will work in partnership to promote the welfare, health and development of children.
- The interests of those who work or volunteer with children will be protected.

# Section Two

## Introduction and policy statement

It is widely accepted that it is the responsibility of every adult to protect children from abuse. Child abuse, and particularly child sexual abuse, can provoke strong emotions in those facing such a situation and it is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with judgment about any action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and sporting environment.

Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children in order to harm them.

Everyone who works in Rugby Union, either in a paid or voluntary capacity, together with those working in affiliated organisations, has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and in preventing any viable opportunities for their abuse. All adult club members and coaches may have regular contact with children and can be a very important link in identifying cases where a child needs protection.

**With the above in mind, the SRFC Management Committee & Members of SRFC recognise that they have a responsibility:**

- To safeguard and promote the interests and well-being of children and vulnerable adults with whom they are working;
- To take all reasonable practical steps to protect children and vulnerable adults from physical harm, discrimination, or degrading treatment; and
- To respect their rights, wishes and feelings.

**Our child protection procedures will:**

- Offer safeguards to the children and vulnerable adults with whom we work and also to our professional members of staff, coaches and club members; and
- Help to maintain the professionalism and the safeguards of good practice which are associated with the RFU and the sport of Rugby Union.

**In addition, SRFC will ensure that:**

- The child's and vulnerable adults welfare is paramount;
- All children and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately; and
- Anyone under the age of 18 years will be considered as a child for the purposes of this document.

It is recognised that any procedure is only as effective as the ability and skill of those who operate it. SRFC is therefore committed to the sound recruitment, provision of support and appropriate training for all professional staff, coaches, volunteers and club members who have SRFC responsibility for children in connection with the Club. This will enable them to work together with parents/carers and other organisations to ensure that the needs and the welfare of children remain paramount.

Upon recruitment, all volunteers of the Club will be provided with a copy of all codes of conduct and will be expected to adhere to the requirements, codes and policies contained therein.

## Definitions

### Children

Children are defined in the Children Act 1989 as people under the age of 18 years. For the purposes of this Policy the legal definition applies.

### 17 Year Olds Playing in the Adult Game

This Policy covers all players under 18. However, in accordance with RFU Regulation 15, a male player can, with the necessary written consent, play in the adult game when he reaches his 17th birthday, although may not play in a front-row position until his 18th birthday. The only exception is England Academy players who require the written consent of the RFU Professional Player Development Manager in accordance with Regulation 15.3.8

([http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/General/General/01/32/01/21/Consentformplayingoutofagegrade\(2016\)\\_English.doc](http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/General/General/01/32/01/21/Consentformplayingoutofagegrade(2016)_English.doc)).

SRFC management team must have assessed and continue to assess, that any 17 year old male player playing in adult games or training is both physically, emotionally and intellectually capable of taking part. Those responsible for the management of adult teams which include 17 year olds, must at all times be mindful of their safety and wellbeing and ensure that a suitable adult from within the team and management acts as a mentor or buddy.

If a 17 year old boy is playing rugby under Regulation 15.3.7, while playing or training with the adults he is treated as an adult and the detail of this Policy does not apply. However, as soon as he is out of that environment the player is once again a child and thus the policies and legislation regarding children apply.

This section does not apply to the women's game where female players may only play in the adult game from their 18th birthday. There is, however, an exception for 17 year old girls allowing them to play adult rugby within the RFU Women's Elite Rugby programme in accordance with Regulation 15.

# Section Three

## Recruitment

Children and vulnerable adults are entitled to participate in rugby union activities in a safe and welcoming environment.

Safe recruitment procedures enable SRFC to reduce the risk of abuse to children.

When recruiting employees or volunteers SRFC adheres to the RFU's recruitment guidelines to ensure only suitable people are selected.

SRFC requires any individual who is to become involved in regulated activity to undertake an interview and a DBS check through the Safeguarding Officer. In addition, SRFC recognises its responsibility to:

- Appoint a Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO), and where appropriate a deputy (CSO), as the first point of contact for safeguarding and welfare concerns(see front page for these people)
- Ensure that the CSO and Safeguarding Assistants:
  - o are members of and attends the appropriate club committees making safeguarding issues a priority at the proper level; and
  - o works in accordance with the RFU's Safeguarding Toolkit  
[http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Safeguarding/01/30/54/28/SafeguardingToolkitprinterfriendly\\_Neutral.pdf](http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Safeguarding/01/30/54/28/SafeguardingToolkitprinterfriendly_Neutral.pdf)
- Develop a safeguarding training plan ensuring that as a minimum:
  - o the CSO & Safeguarding Assistants attend an “In Touch” Workshop within six months of taking up the post
  - o each mini and youth age group has at least one person who has attended the “Play It Safe” course
- Inform all members, parents and children when a new CSO/Deputy CSO or Safeguarding Assistant is appointed
- Publish the club’s own safeguarding policy which reinforces the RFU Safeguarding Policy and procedures which reflects unique local circumstances for our club and makes it accessible to all members
- Ensure all club officers and committee members are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities
- Ensure that at any youth disciplinary panel the CSO/Deputy CSO or Safeguarding Assistant is available to support the child and ensures the panel considers the child’s emotional wellbeing throughout
- Identify any signs of harm and reports them to the CBSM and/or the RFU Safeguarding team
- Ensure that the club’s children’s workforce have up-to-date DBS checks in accordance with Best Practice Guidance and RFU Regulation 21.

## Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. It replaces the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

Any adult who works in regulated activity on a paid or voluntary basis with children in rugby in England must comply with the requirements of the RFU's DBS process. These requirements are that an individual must apply for a DBS disclosure processed through the RFU Safeguarding Department within four weeks of their employment or appointment.

Whilst awaiting their DBS disclosure a person may temporarily work on a paid or voluntary basis with children provided they are supervised at all times during any activity involving children by a person who is DBS cleared within the Club pending their DBS clearance or notification from the RFU that they have not been cleared.

<http://www.englandrugby.com/governance/safeguarding/disclosure-and-barring-service-guidance/>

## Regulated Activity

To be deemed as being in 'regulated activity' within a rugby setting, the position must meet the following criteria and frequency (when working with children) in order to be deemed 'regulated activity'

Activity: Teaching, training, instruction, care or supervision of children, carried out by the same person frequently (once a week or more often), or on 4 or more days in a 30-day period, or overnight, all on an unsupervised basis.

An Enhanced DBS check (without barred list checks) can be applied for if the role is specified under the activity above. However, at all times the individual must be supervised by an individual in regulated activity i.e. has been DBS checked to enhanced level with an appropriate barred list check.

There are certain roles that are not deemed eligible for a DBS check, as per below:

- Bar Staff/Catering Staff
- Youth Registrars
- Anyone whose only role is to access database information (e.g. RFU Game Management System).

Bar or catering staff for example - The role itself does not meet the regulated activity definition as any contact with children or vulnerable adults is incidental. As such this role is ineligible for a DBS check.

An individual may be eligible for a DBS check if they hold an additional role that does meet the Regulated Activity criteria e.g. coach. In this type of case, only the main eligible role will be declared on the DBS application.

Additionally, parents/helpers on overnight tours will only be eligible for an Enhanced DBS (with Barred List) check if it can be demonstrated that the role is clearly covered by the Regulated Activity criteria (as set out above).

Once the DBS certificate has been received in the post, the member must show this to the Safeguarding Officer.

Update Service will follow when available.

<http://www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/volunteers/volunteer-roles/>

# Section Four

## What is Abuse?

### 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.

### **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.

SRFC exercises a zero tolerance response to bullying and we follow the RFU guidance on anti bullying [http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/MyRugby/Volunteers/01/30/36/55/RFU\\_Safeguarding\\_Policy\\_Guidance\\_and\\_Procedures\\_Neutral.pdf](http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/MyRugby/Volunteers/01/30/36/55/RFU_Safeguarding_Policy_Guidance_and_Procedures_Neutral.pdf).

### 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 SRFC's codes of conduct as detailed in the Volunteer Pack. (Safeguarding Toolkit pp 12-13)

# Section Five

## Policy

At SRFC we believe that taking part in our sport should be both a positive and enjoyable part of children's lives which produces a rewarding experience.

We want to make sure that children are protected and kept safe from abuse (physical injury, neglect, sexual or emotional abuse) whilst they are with the Club's professional staff, coaches, volunteers and/or club members.

### **To achieve this, we will:**

- When seeking to appoint a new Coach, follow the process documented in "Guidelines for Recruiting Coaches" as outlined in the RFU 'Policy and Procedures for the Safeguarding of Young People in Rugby Union' [http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Safeguarding/01/30/56/33/RFUSafeguardingPolicyprinterfriendly\\_Neutral.pdf](http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Safeguarding/01/30/56/33/RFUSafeguardingPolicyprinterfriendly_Neutral.pdf) pp 8-9;
- Ensure that all officers and committee members are aware of their responsibility in this area and that the Club respond to any indication of poor practice or abuse in line with RFU Policy;
- Implement a policy of Best Practice for all adults working with young people;
- Ensure that all relevant members who have regular supervisory contact with children or a management responsibility for those working with young people undertake a DBS application; and
- Identify a disciplinary panel which, where necessary, is able to manage cases of poor practice as identified by the RFU Child Protection.
- Ensure that all Coaches and other volunteers working directly with children will have a job description <http://www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/volunteers/volunteer-roles/> ;
- Ensure that all volunteers and members will be given copies of the volunteer pack which contains all appropriate policies and codes of conduct.
- Actively encourage women to become Coaches as well as men;
- A Coach must obtain the RFU Rugby Ready award before he/she is allowed to be the Coach of an age group;
- Undertake a regular risk assessment of the playing environment and the equipment used, ensuring that the necessary maintenance is undertaken promptly to minimise the risk of accident or injury;
- Ensure that the Mini and Youth Sections will keep written records of any accidents which occur during either training or match sessions (all team managers have been given an accident book to keep to hand and use when required);
- Provide all Coaches and Parents/with a written procedure for dealing with accusations or suspicions of child abuse (RFU Safeguarding Policy p 17 – also see Appendices);
- Promote 'fair play' and always play within the spirit of the laws and the letter of the RFU Continuum;
- Identify and appoint a Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO) whose role it is to deal with any concerns about child abuse within the Club;

- The Club Safeguarding Officer; the Club Chairman and the Chairman of the Mini and Youth sections will undertake appropriate training to enable them to fulfil their respective roles in the SRFC Child Protection procedures;
- The Club recognises that publicity and pictures of young people enjoying rugby are essential to promote the sport and a healthy lifestyle and will abide by the rules set out in the photographic guidelines (RFU Safeguarding Policy p15);
- All allegations relating to child abuse will be handled in accordance with the Club's detailed Child Safeguarding procedures.

**Cyber Guidance:** The Club has the following policy

- All volunteers working at SRFC should familiarise themselves with the Cyber Guidance section of the RFU safeguarding toolkit for detailed and up to date advice in this area (pp 8-9).
- Please note that all coaches and club officials must communicate with children via their parents, whether this be via phone, text or email. Youth players may be copied into squad emails, so long as their parents are also on the distribution list. If a youth player contacts a coach or club official by email, the response must be emailed to the parents, copying the child in. A youth email address is NOT an alternative to a parental email address.
- In addition, please note that adults connected with the club should not communicate with children through social networking sites such as Facebook or be 'friends' with the children they coach. In the instance of closed (age-group specific) Facebook groups, these should be a forum for parents of squad members to share information about fixtures, results, photos, cancellations etc.

Where a child is under the age of 13, these must be CHILD FREE ZONES and set up as a private/secret group so that no one can search for what is posted. If a child leaves the squad, the associated parents should be respectfully removed from the group immediately. Only current parents of a team can be in a group, with the addition of a member from the CSO team.

# Section Six

## Best Practice

SRFC's aim is to create a culture where everyone feels confident to raise legitimate concerns without prejudice to their own position. Concerns about the behaviour of coaches, officials or any members of the Club which may be harmful to a child in their care must be reported to the RFU Safeguarding Team through SRFC's Safeguarding Officer.

While remembering that it is the safety and welfare of children that is of paramount importance, there will be times when those responsible will need to exercise discretion and common sense to ensure their wellbeing.

## Environment

As a year round sport weather conditions present all rugby clubs with a range of considerations: extremes of heat, sun, rain, frost and snow. It is the responsibility of SRFC to carry out a risk assessment of the environmental conditions both before and during a game or training session.

Conditions such as frost and drought can result in a hard and dangerous playing surface. Children will always be advised to wear appropriate clothing for the season and all players will be monitored to ensure their wellbeing throughout a session. All players will be encouraged to keep hydrated throughout a session particularly during the warmer months.

## Frequency of Play

SRFC recognises that the RFU take overplaying and over commitment seriously, especially where it relates to players under the age of 18. The RFU's Regulation 15 (See appendices) and its guidelines identify the parameters in relation to the amount of time any player is playing or training. Rugby is only part of a child's development and should always be balanced alongside other academic and sporting commitments.

## Playing Kit and Equipment

IRB Law 4 (<http://laws.worldrugby.org/?law=4&language=EN>) details the definition of playing kit and also goes on to regulate for any additional items of clothing including pads, mits, medical support and mouthguards. It also goes on to identify banned items of clothing such as jewellery, sharp items and zips. Ultimately, it is the referee's decision to determine whether any item of the players' clothing is acceptable or not and his decision is final.

**Names on shirts:** there are no RFU regulations governing the appearance of players' names or nicknames on their kit. However, it is considered poor practice to do so as it allows the child to be easily identified by those to whom the child is otherwise, unknown.

**Mouthguards:** whilst the wearing of a mouthguard is not mandatory, it is a recommendation that all age grade players wear one. It is, however, mandatory in certain competitions and festivals.

**Studs and Blades:** these must not be sharp or abrasive. It is the referee's decision as to whether or not a player's studs, or blades, are acceptable. It is advisable for players to have boots with interchangeable studs so that they may be replaced if they become worn or dangerous.

**Goggles/glasses:** players may not wear glasses whilst playing. Only players in the U7s and U8s age group may wear glasses or goggles. Regulation 15 sets out the parameters in detail. Contact lenses may be worn. This is currently under review. Please refer to the RFU Website for the most up-to-date information regarding the wearing of goggles

**Hearing aids:** whilst contrary to IRB Laws of the Game, the RFU provide detailed guidance on the issue of hearing aids and cochlear implants. This can be found on the RFU website and SRFC will adhere to this guidance.

### Concussion

SRFC fully adheres to the guidelines regarding concussion and take this issue very seriously. All coaches and managers have been asked to complete the online Headcase concussion module. Parents are also able to do this and this should be promoted within SRFC.

[http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/MyRugby/Headcase/01/30/49/67/rfu\\_headcase\\_changingroomposters\\_printerfriendly\\_Neutral.pdf](http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/MyRugby/Headcase/01/30/49/67/rfu_headcase_changingroomposters_printerfriendly_Neutral.pdf)

<http://www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/players/player-health/concussion-headcase/resources/>

### Under 5/6's

SRFC does provide the opportunity for under 6's to participate in rugby related activities and therefore ensures the following additional factors:

- All parents/guardians must remain on the premises throughout a session
- Activities are located within easy reach of shelter and toilets.
- A session will not exceed 45 minutes and there will be at least one break for refreshments.
- Coaches will be alert to the mental and physical capabilities of the individual children involved and will be prepared to adapt/curtail sessions in the event that the children become tired or lose concentration.
- Whilst all children will normally start activities at the same time, their parents/guardians will be instructed that they may withdraw them at any time during the session.
- Where there is a wide range of children they will be matched to activities according to age and development. The format of any session will be designed to give these children confidence in carrying out basic movement skills, in the context of fair play, sharing and co-operation. Children need to spend time learning how the game works and its laws, so they become familiar and confident with the game before joining those who are more experienced.
- The group will be functionally separate from all other age groups and no matches may be played between the children and those of different clubs.

### Managing challenging behaviour

There will be times when members of SRFC volunteer coaches will have to deal with children's challenging behaviour.

Autism, Aspergers, Dyspraxia, ADD and ADHD are being more widely recognised and diagnosed.

SRFC do not consider these conditions a bar to playing rugby and indeed recognise that competitive sports can often improve a child's behaviour.

SRFC will do everything possible for children with these conditions to be able to play rugby; listening to the parents and learning from their experience is an important part of this. The RFU is currently doing research on this area and will be publishing the results in due course. Once published, SRFC will adhere to the RFU's guidance. A useful document that provides guidance can be found in Sports UK Inclusive Coaching Quick Guide [www.ukcoaching.org/sites/default/files/Quick-Guide-to-Inclusive-Coaching.pdf](http://www.ukcoaching.org/sites/default/files/Quick-Guide-to-Inclusive-Coaching.pdf)

## Training

SRFC encourages all adults who have a coaching role to attend an appropriate Rugby Union Coaching course and a “Play It Safe” course. This is an introductory level safeguarding course designed for any club members.

SRFC’s Safeguarding Officer (CSO) has attended the RFU “In Touch” Workshop, which covers their role and responsibilities.

## Supervision

To provide a safe environment, SRFC ensures that their volunteers and employees when working with children avoid working in isolation out of the sight of parents or other volunteers.

Whilst volunteers and employees are awaiting their DBS disclosure they must be supervised by someone who does have DBS clearance.

SRFC does not operate crèche or 'drop-and-go' facilities at any time and parents/guardians are expected to remain on site during training or matches at all times. In the event of parents with children in several age groups, they should ensure an appropriate adult is aware of their location (pitch side of other age groups, etc) and that appropriate adult should be left with a contact mobile telephone number in the event of an emergency.

## Adult : Child Ratios

There should always be at least one DBS checked adult in charge of any group of children.

The RFU recommends and SRFC supports a minimum ratio of adult to children of:

- 1:10 for children over 8 years old aged at least 9
- 1:8 for children under 8 years old aged 7 and 8
- 1:6 for children under 7 years old.

## Tours

These Policy guidelines apply equally on tour as at the club. When on tour if an adult is solely there supporting their own child they will not need DBS clearance but they will if they are acting in any official capacity with other children. This may apply to those on bedtime or other supervisory duties.

Please consult SRFC Tours policy if organising any rugby tour. This can be found on the club’s Pitchero website. The club’s policy follows that of the RFU guidance <http://www.englandrugby.com/governance/game-support/rugby-tours/resources-and-forms/>

## Inappropriate Relationships with Children

An adult in a position of trust must not enter into a sexual relationship with a child in their care. Sexual intercourse, sexual activity, or inappropriate touching by an adult with a child under the age of 16 years is a criminal offence, even where there is apparent consent from the child.

A sexual relationship between an adult in a position of trust and a child over 16 years of age is a breach of trust and an abuse of the adult’s position. Whilst it may not be a criminal offence, in a rugby union setting it will be treated very seriously and may result in RFU disciplinary action, including suspension from attending rugby clubs.

The RFU has a legal duty to refer anyone removed from regulated activity to the DBS. Therefore, an adult in a position of trust involved in a sexual relationship with a child over 16 years of age may be referred to the DBS for consideration. This could result in the adult being barred from working with children by the DBS.

No-one in a position of trust should encourage a physical or emotionally dependent relationship to develop between them and a child in their care; this is often referred to as grooming.

Adults must never send children inappropriate or sexually provocative messages or images by text, or other electronic media.

### Safeguarding disabled children

SRFC recognise that disabled children and their families may need additional information, help and support and coaches may require additional training and advice to ensure they include and safeguard them. Some children may be more susceptible to harm than other participants because they may: lack the mutual support and protection of a peer group, require higher degrees of physical care and support, have limited communication skills, find it difficult to resist inappropriate interventions, have several carers making it difficult to identify an abuser, have a history of having limited or no choice or have a degree of dependency on a carer conflicting with the need to report harm or raise concerns.

SRFC is also aware of the additional vulnerability some children experience as a result of a wide spectrum of issues such as autism, attention deficit disorder and a variety of other disorders and SRFC will do everything it can to support these children – see managing challenging behaviour above.

### Good role models

All club members, coaches, and other professional members of staff, whether employed or volunteers will be expected by SRFC to consistently display high standards of personal behaviour and appearance and refrain from pursuits considered unhealthy in front of their players.

They must not make sexually explicit comments to children and any language which causes them to feel uncomfortable or lose confidence or self-esteem is unacceptable, as is the use of obscene or foul language.

### Alcohol

SRFC's management committees take considered positive action to ensure that they are responsible licensees. We recognise that it is against the law:

- To sell alcohol to someone under 18 and/or give alcohol to someone under 18
- For an adult to buy or attempt to buy alcohol on behalf of someone under 18 alcohol or to be sold alcohol

At training sessions and games for children, adults' drinking habits may affect both children's attitudes to alcohol and their emotional well-being. As role models adults should avoid excessive drinking in their presence.

The unexpected can always happen; there should always be adults who abstain from drinking alcohol to deal with any emergencies and to manage the safety and welfare of children in their care.

### Contact rugby

SRFC expects the wellbeing and safety of children to be placed above the development of performance. Contact skills must be taught in a safe, secure manner paying due regard to the physical development of the players involved. Adults and children must never play contact versions of the sport together including training games or contact drills. They may play either tag or touch rugby together if these games are managed and organised appropriately. A risk assessment on the conditions, players and apparent risks must be carried out by a person responsible for the overall session. Coaches are not allowed to hold tackle pads/shields/etc. as stipulated in the Safeguarding toolkit.

## Coaching techniques

Any inappropriate or aggressive contact between adults and children is unacceptable and a number of principles must be followed when teaching contact rugby:

- Physical handling by a coach must only be used for safety reasons or where there is no other way of coaching the technique
- The reasons for physical contact should be explained wherever practicable so that children and their parents are comfortable with this approach.
- The activity should always be conducted in an open environmental and in the presence of another adult.

## Physical intervention

Discipline on the field of play is the responsibility of the players. Coaches, team managers and parents must always promote good discipline amongst players, both on and off the field. Penalising lack of discipline on the field of play which contravenes the laws of the game is the responsibility of the referee. Coaches, managers and spectators should not intervene or enter the field of play.

In a situation where individuals have to consider whether to intervene to prevent a child being injured, injuring themselves or others, physical intervention should always be avoided unless absolutely necessary. In these situations it is imperative to:

- Consider your own safety
- Give verbal instructions first
- Use the minimum reasonable force and only when necessary to resolve the incident, the purpose being restraint and reducing risk
- Do not strike blows, act with unnecessary force or retaliate
- Avoid contact with intimate parts of the body, the head and neck
- Stay in control of your actions

The SO/CSOs and Mini or Youth Manager should be notified at the earliest opportunity of an incident of physical intervention which involves possible dispute as a complaint might be lodged with the RFU or the police by a parent whose child has been physically restrained. The incident will be recorded on the RFU Initial Issue/Concern Reporting Form and sent to the RFU's Safeguarding Team.

SRFC recognises that physical intervention, often referred to in education as 'Positive Handling', should only be used to achieve an outcome in the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern or other children involved and never as a form of punishment.

## Changing rooms & showers

Adults and children must never use the same facilities to shower or change at the same time.

Adults must only enter changing rooms when absolutely necessary due to poor behaviour, injury or illness. Adults must only ever enter the changing rooms by themselves in an emergency and when waiting for another adult could result in harm to a child.

If children need supervising in changing rooms, or coaches or managers need to carry out a range of tasks in that environment this must involve two individuals cleared to work in Regulated Activity of the same gender as the children. For mixed gender activities separate facilities will be made available.

If the same facilities must be used by adults and children on the same day a clear timetable will be established. No pressure should be placed on children who feel uncomfortable changing or showering with others, if this is the case they should be allowed to shower and change at home. SRFC recommends that children should wear a spare pair of underwear when showering at the club. This must be seen as normal practices and promoted as such.

Where a disability requires significant support from a parent; or carer, the person concerned and their parents should decide how they should be assisted to change or shower. Before any assistance is offered by another person, appropriate consent should be given by a parent.

### Transportation

In most instances it is the responsibility of parents, not SRFC, to transport their child to and from the club or nominated meeting point. If parents make arrangements between themselves this is a private arrangement and at the parents' discretion.

If SRFC hires a coach from a reputable commercial coach company it is entitled to assume that the company provides properly maintained and insured vehicles and properly licensed drivers. However, children must never travel unaccompanied. A member of the club must travel with the children and that adult's contact details must be readily available to any parent who has reason to contact them.

If the club formally arranges transport e.g. using minibuses or people carriers (as opposed to facilitating travel arrangements between parents) then the club should ensure that:

- Drivers have a valid driving licence and recruitment procedures, including vetting criteria have been followed and appropriate insurance and breakdown cover has been arranged.
- The vehicle is suitable for the number of passengers and has operational safety belts and appropriate child car seats.
- Parents give their consent and have the driver's contact details, with the driver having easy access to parents' contact details including mobile phone numbers
- No child is left alone in the car with the driver, unless it is the adult's own child. If, in extenuating circumstances, this situation arises the child should sit in the back of the car if possible
- The children involved are happy with the arrangement and adults are alert to any signs of disquiet.

In the event of a late collection of children, coaches and volunteers should attempt to contact the parents, wait with the child, preferably in the company of others, notify the SO/CSO/club official and remind parents of their responsibility to collect their child promptly.

### Photographic/video Images

SRFC positively encourages parents and spectators to take photographs of participants involved in rugby to celebrate the ethos and spirit of the sport. However, there may be circumstances where taking a photograph of a child might not be acceptable. Any photograph (digital or printed) which is produced and released into the public domain may be misused by anyone as once this has been done, control has been lost. In this day and age when it is so easy to upload or email a photograph within seconds of it being taken, it is worth taking a moment to consider the issue of control.

SRFC's video/photographic images policy is based on common sense. Please refer to the Welcome Pack for further details and consent form for photographic images.

### Cyber awareness

Websites are a key part of the daily operation of most clubs including SRFC. They are a flexible way to communicate with members and to anyone interested in joining our club. SRFC does however recognise that inappropriate content contained on our website could be perceived as bullying (if a blog for example were to cause embarrassment or humiliation to a child).

SRFC has therefore produced a Cyber Guidance policy – please refer to section 5 of this document.

# Section Seven

## 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.

Harm in the context of this Policy is an action or behaviour which has a detrimental effect on a child's physical or emotional health or wellbeing. Harm is often referred to as neglect, abuse or bullying. Harm may start as poor practice, which might include: shouting, excessive training, ignoring health and safety guidelines, failing to adhere to this Safeguarding Policy, poor management of multiple squad age groups, including favouring or discriminating against particular teams and ridicule of players' errors. Neither poor practice nor suspicions of harm should be ignored. Whether physical, sexual, emotional, bullying or neglect, suspicions of harm should always be reported and victims supported throughout.

Please refer to the flowchart for the steps to be followed. The flowchart does not distinguish between the environment in which the concerns arise whether inside or outside the rugby environment. It is also appropriate to follow this procedure for allegations of abuse by one child against another

## Signs of Harm

It is important that in the rugby environment signs of harm are not ignored. These signs may include a child:

- Changing their usual routine
- Beginning to be disruptive during sessions
- Becoming withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Having possessions going missing
- Becoming aggressive or unreasonable
- Starting to stammer or stopping communicating
- Having unexplained cuts or bruises
- Starting to bully other children
- Being frequently dirty, hungry or inadequately dressed
- Displaying sexual behaviour or using sexual language inappropriate for their age
- Seeming afraid of parents or carers
- Stopping eating
- Being frightened to say what's wrong
- Not wanting to attend training or club activities, or even leaving the club.

The above indicators should always be taken seriously and any concerns should be reported to the SO/CSO. In their absence the CBSM or RFU Safeguarding team should be informed at the earliest possible opportunity. Any report must be made in writing to the RFU.

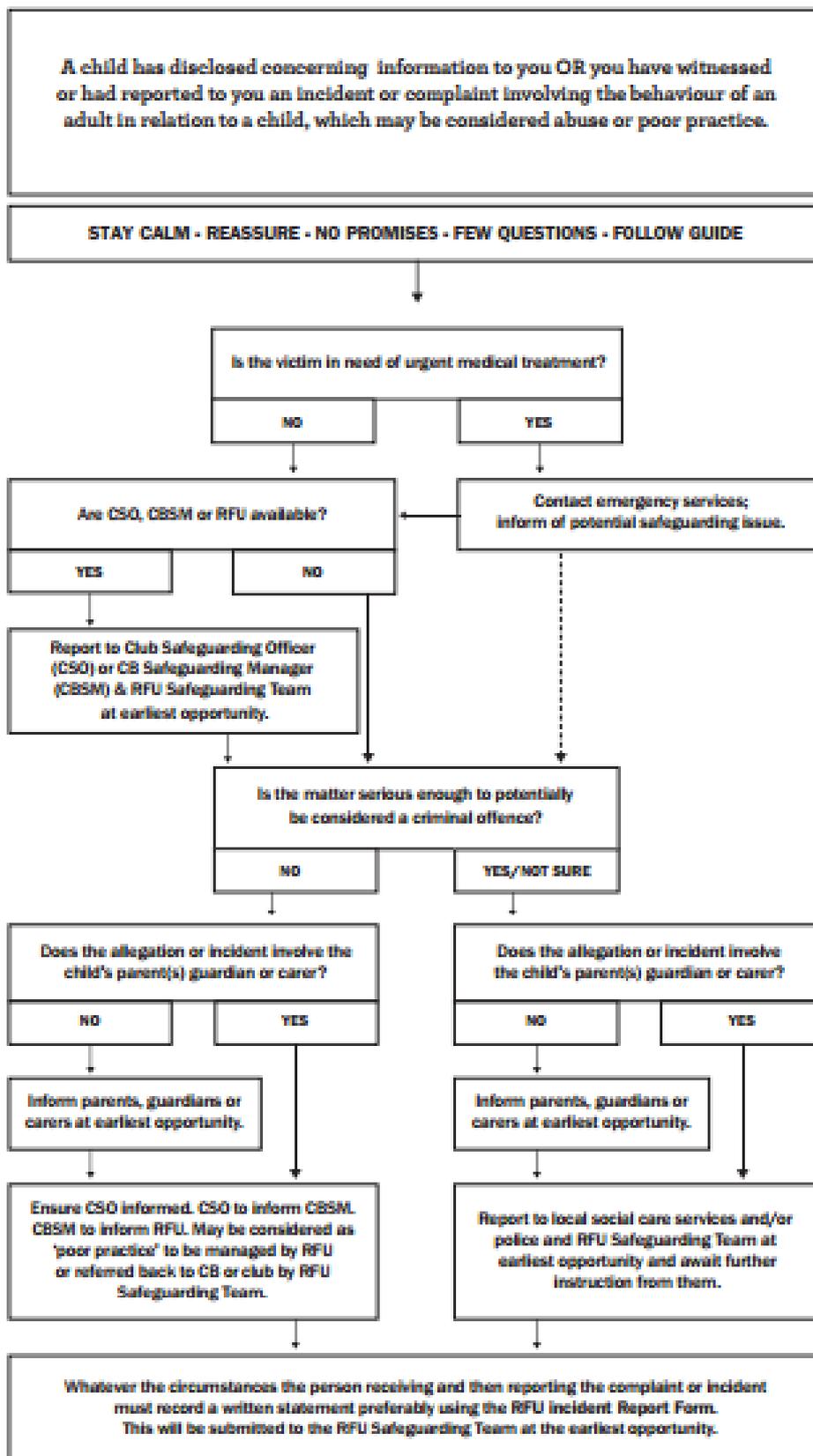
There may be a number of reasons why a child displays concerning behaviour or their behaviour changes. It is advisable to discuss concerns with parents or carers in the first instance except where this may place a child at increased risk.

If a child discloses information to you, you should:

- Stay calm
- Reassure them that they are not to blame
- Avoid making promises of confidentiality or outcome
- Keep questions to a minimum
- Make brief, accurate notes at the earliest opportunity

An individual who becomes aware of any suspicions or concerns about the safety or welfare of a child must pass these on to the CSO/Deputy CSO or Safeguarding Assistant as soon as possible. If they feel the child is in immediate risk of abuse then a statutory agency (local children's services or the police) should be contacted immediately.

Procedure Flowchart



# Section Eight

## Responding to suspicions or concerns

SRFC fully supports that the RFU encourages and supports “whistle-blowing” and will, where appropriate, notify the statutory agencies of any allegation and work in partnership with them. RFU investigation will usually commence once the statutory agencies have completed their investigations and refer the case back to the RFU.

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 SRFC will take no further action until advised to do so by the RFU or relevant authority. The RFU will ensure that SRFC and Constituent Body (Essex RFU) are kept informed of procedure and progress. Safeguarding investigations are handled by the RFU Safeguarding team and presented to the RFU’s Referral Management Group (RMG) or it’s Sub-Group for consideration. The RMG is a cross-departmental group charged by the RFU with assessing the risk that individuals pose to children. The RMG is supported by an independent safeguarding advisor. Incidents may be referred by the RMG or its Sub-Group to the RFU Discipline department.

## Those under investigation

Under this Policy SRFC 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 and SRFC strictly adheres to this route.

# Appendices

RFU Safeguarding Policy

[http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Safeguarding/01/30/56/33/RFUSafeguardingPolicyprinterfriendly\\_Neutral.pdf](http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Safeguarding/01/30/56/33/RFUSafeguardingPolicyprinterfriendly_Neutral.pdf)

RFU Safeguarding Toolkit

[http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Safeguarding/01/30/54/28/SafeguardingToolkitprinterfriendly\\_Neutral.pdf](http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Safeguarding/01/30/54/28/SafeguardingToolkitprinterfriendly_Neutral.pdf)

RFU Regulation 21 – Safeguarding

[http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Regulations/01/30/35/32/RFU\\_Regulation\\_21\\_Neutral.pdf](http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Regulations/01/30/35/32/RFU_Regulation_21_Neutral.pdf)

Age Grade Rugby

<http://www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/players/age-grade-rugby/?webSyncID=37382329-7cc7-e1a7-3db0-b74e5510b66b&sessionGUID=c719602c-3da5-7e2b-1d84-7b3b1d73138e#>

RFU Regulation 15

[http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Regulations/01/30/34/88/RFU\\_Regulation\\_15\\_Neutral.pdf](http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Regulations/01/30/34/88/RFU_Regulation_15_Neutral.pdf)

RFU Regulation 15 Guidance

[http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Regulations/01/30/35/01/Guidance\\_to\\_age\\_grade\\_regulation\\_15\\_Neutral.pdf](http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Regulations/01/30/35/01/Guidance_to_age_grade_regulation_15_Neutral.pdf)

RFU New Rules of Play

<http://www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/coaches/new-rules-of-play/>

RFU Governance

<http://www.englandrugby.com/governance/>

RFU national Safeguarding Team

<http://www.englandrugby.com/governance/safeguarding/contact-us/>