



HARLOW RUGBY CLUB

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

September 2025

INTRODUCTION

The child protection policy of Harlow Rugby Club is in force because it is accepted that it is the responsibility of every adult to ensure children enjoy rugby union in a safe environment.

Therefore, the club has a responsibility:

- To safeguard and promote the interests and well being of children who play rugby.
- To take all reasonable practical steps to protect children from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment.
- To respect children's rights, wishes and feelings.
- To ensure that all adults are aware of their responsibilities when working with young children.

The child protection procedures will:-

- Offer safeguards to the children with whom we work, and to our professional members of staff, coaches and club members.
- Help to maintain the professionalism and the safeguards of good practice, which are associated with the RFU and RFUW.

In order for the child protection policy to be effective it is necessary for codes of practice to be in force for the following persons.

- The Child Safeguarding Officer (See appendix A)
- The Coaches (See appendix B)
- Helpers/Carers (See appendix C)
- The players (See appendix D)
- Parents and Supporters (see appendix E)

PRINCIPLE STATEMENT

The young player's welfare is paramount.

All young players 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.

Anyone under the age of 18 years should be considered as a young player for the purposes of this document.

The club shall appoint a Child Safeguarding Officer who shall be responsible for the implementation, monitoring and the enforcement of the club's child protection policy.

The club shall appoint (if required) a nominated officer to assist the Child Safeguarding Officer.

ABUSE TAKING PLACE WITHIN THE RUGBY ENVIRONMENT

The club will not tolerate any form of abuse, towards young Members of the club.

There are of course so many forms of abuse that it would not be possible to provide a definitive list.

The main forms of abuse are:-

- Emotional abuse.
- Neglect.
- Physical abuse.
- Sexual abuse.

PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS

Where any person has concern about the behaviour of a member of staff, coach or volunteer or any other person the following action will be taken:-

- The incident will be reported to the Child Safeguarding Officer or his nominated Officer.

- The Child Safeguarding Officer or his nominated Officer must ensure the safety of the child or children without delay.
- If the incident relates to poor practice, the Child Safeguarding Officer will deal with it as an internal club issue.
- If the concerns remain then the matter will be referred to professional staff (ECRU Welfare Officer) or RFU/RFUW staff for a decision on how to handle the issue.
- If it appears that the concerns relate to an unlawful act the concern will be reported to the Child Safeguarding Officer or his nominated officer (who will ensure the ECRU welfare officer is informed as soon as possible).
- If the concern relates to the person in charge ensure the safety of the child and then report to Professional staff (ECRU Welfare Officer).
- In the case of suspected unlawful acts having complied as above refer the matter to the Police or Social Services.
 - Assist Police or Social Services as required.
 - Report the incident to ECRU Welfare Officer.
 - Report to the RFU ethics and equity manager.
 - The RFU will decide whether to suspend temporarily pending enquiries.
 - The RFU will decide who and how to handle any media enquiries.
 - The RFU will arrange disciplinary/misconduct proceedings.

In all cases a written record will be kept of the allegation, the investigation and the outcome. This record will be kept confidentially.

NOTE

Some incidents may be of such a serious nature that there is no alternative but to inform the Police immediately, having done this please revert to the laid down procedure.

ABUSE TAKING PLACE OUTSIDE THE RUGBY ENVIRONMENT

It may come to notice that abuse of a young person is suspected of taking place outside the rugby environment. If this is the case it will be dealt with as follows:-

- Your concerns should be reported to the Child Safeguarding Officer or his nominated officer.
- If they are not contactable then the matter should be reported to the Police or Social Services without delay.

- The matter should then be referred to the Child Safeguarding Officer who will report the matter to the professional staff (ECRU Welfare Officer).

NOTE

In such cases it is NOT your decision as to whether abuse has taken place or not. That decision will be left to the Police or Social Services.

Where there are concerns that unlawful abuse has taken place either within or outside the rugby environment please follow the course of action below.

DO

- Ensure that the child is removed from any danger.
- Inform the relevant persons.
- Listen to what the child has to say to you.
- Record what the child has said, or what has been seen. Include dates and times. Also record the time and date that the notes were made.
- Reassure the child that they are not to blame and confirm that you know how difficult it must be to confide.
- Ensure that you have clearly understood what the child has said.
- Only allow one adult to talk to the child as any discrepancies in statements may lead to legal problems.
- Follow guidelines relating to confidentiality.

DO NOT

- Question the child.
- Ignore what has been said.
- Panic.
- Challenge parent or guardian.
- Make promises you cannot keep i.e. confidentiality.
- Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily.
- Delay the reporting process.

Appendix A

THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

AND NOMINATED OFFICER

CODES OF PRACTICE

NB The Child Safeguarding officer and nominated officer will follow the same codes of practice

- The Child Safeguarding/nominated officer will be subjected to a Disclosure and Barring Service check.
- If the Child Safeguarding/nominated officer is a coach then they will also comply with the coaches code of practice.
- The Child Safeguarding/nominated officer will ensure that the child protection policy is in force and is complied with, within the club.
- The Child Safeguarding officer will ensure, that all coaches comply with criteria for becoming a club coach and undergo all necessary training.
- The Child Safeguarding officer will keep a record of all details relating to coaches.
- Upon receipt of any form of complaint the Child Safeguarding/nominated officer will immediately comply with the criteria in this policy in respect of investigating and reporting the incident.
- The Child Safeguarding officer will keep a record of all complaints received, together with details of the investigation including the outcome of the investigation.

Appendix B

THE COACHES

CODE OF PRACTICE

Any coach working with young players within a Rugby Union Football Club is part of a structure with many stakeholders, and as such the coach has responsibilities to all of them.

This code has been written to remind or inform coaches of those responsibilities and the minimum standards of behaviour commensurate with fulfilling them.

Each season every coach active in the section will be called on to warrant that they have read understood and intend to abide by this code.

- Be aware of the codes of practice exist read and understand them.
- Be aware that the club's child protection policy exists, read and understand it.

Child Safeguarding Officer : Melanie White safeguarding@harlowrugby.club

PLAYERS

- Rugby is only part of their lives, recognise this and allow for it on your demands on them.
- Treat games against other clubs as lessons, opportunities to learn, not as a test.
- Rugby is not for everyone. Do not rely on your star player and never make a player feel like a spare part. Share your time and game time equally.
- Never ridicule or belittle any player. Make every player feel valued. To do this would be considered as emotional abuse.
- Take an interest in each player. Know a little about his/her family and other interests. Be able to spot changes in their behaviour.
- Find out the facts about child development and the physical, intellectual and emotional capabilities of the age group that you work with.

RUGBY UNION

- Rugby is a potentially dangerous game, which relies upon every player having mutual respect. Teach the players you work with the meaning of fair play and set them a good example.

- Rugby works best when sides are evenly matched. Try to avoid mismatch, especially during training sessions.
- Understand the continuum and abide by it. You have no options, as they are the laws of the game.
- Learn the laws and how to referee.
- Teach players by your own example to respect the referee.

COACHING

- When you call yourself a coach you apply to join an elite, when others call you a coach you have achieved membership. Behave as you would expect a coach should.
- Always look like a coach, always act like a coach.
- Try to start and finish on time.
- Plan your session.
- Plan your season.
- Do not drink alcohol before or during your coaching.
- Never give alcohol to those not old enough to drink it by law.
- Do not smoke when coaching.
- Never ignore bad coaching practise or behaviour. Report it as per the procedure in the child protection policy.
- Keep up to date with current coaching practises and law.
- Be aware that you are responsible for the players you work with, so don't allow players to play on an injury. Refer them to a doctor or sports injury clinic. Ensure you enter ALL injuries into the accident book and get a parent/ guardian to sign the entry. It is for your protection.
- Ensure the safety of the children you are coaching by making sure that they have the correct safety equipment and adequate clothing for the conditions. To fail to do this could be considered as neglect **or** physical abuse.
- Ensure safety by teaching the correct techniques; ensure the playing area is safe and free from glass, wood and other such nuisances. Ensure the equipment used is in order. If it is not report it, don't just put it back for the next person to find.

DO NOT PUT YOURSELF IN A POSITION WHERE YOU COULD BE SUSPECTED OF VERBAL, PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE WITH ANY CHILD.

Appendix C

THE PLAYER CODES OF PRACTICE

Rugby is a team game, be a member of the whole team.

Do not bully any of your team mates.

If you see any bullying by your team mates or any other person report it to your coach, he knows how to deal with it.

Learn to play the game safely.

Learn the laws of the game and always play within the laws.

Respect the coaches, the referees, your opponents, your team mates, and any spectators.

Appendix D

CARERS/HELPERS CODES OF PRACTICE

All carers/helpers should be aware of the child protection policy they should read it and understand it.

All carers/helpers should not accept bad practice or unlawful acts by any person don't ignore it report it.

Appendix E

PARENTS/SUPPORTERS

CODES OF PRACTICE

Your child has entered the game of rugby and as such the club is sure that you will want to support them. Indeed, the club will encourage you to become involved in the game.

However, it must never be forgotten that the game of rugby is for the enjoyment of the player.

To that end the club has a code of practice for parents and supporters:

- Respect all players, coaches and officials.
- Do not swear at any person present, during training or games.

Child Safeguarding Officer : Melanie White, safeguarding@harlowrugby.club
Do not give negative criticism, encourage, the game will improve with encouragement. It will not with criticism.

- As a parent you should be aware that the club has a child protection policy, it is available for you to read. Should you become aware of any bad practice towards players, don't ignore it, report it.
- Do not allow your child to play on an injury.
- Assist your child to learn the laws of the game and encourage them to play within the laws of the game.
- Ensure that your child has adequate clothing and equipment to play the game safely.

NOTES OF GUIDANCE FOR THE CLUB IN RESPECT OF EMPLOYMENT OF ALL STAFF, PROFESSIONAL OR VOLUNTEERS.

ALL STAFF

All staff that have or may have contact with young persons within the club will complete an application form that will allow the club to:

- Find out about their past career.
- Find out if they have a criminal record. They will be subjected to a Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS).

- They will provide two references, which will be taken up by the club.
- All information given to the club by individuals about themselves is kept confidential.
- **All completed application forms and reference forms will be destroyed by Harlow Rugby Club and copies will not be retained once Harlow Rugby Club has satisfied itself that the due diligence has been undertaken as per RFU guidelines.**
- All staff that have or may have contact with young persons will undertake child protection/child abuse training.
- Every applicant should be made aware of the club's attitude to child protection and they should be provided with a written copy of the clubs policy.

COACHES

- All coaches will go on an introductory course such as an RFU foundation or tag rugby course before they begin coaching although they may only assist prior to this course.
- All coaches and other helpers will comply with the coach's code of practice.
- All coaches will be qualified to minimum National Governing Body level 1 standard before they are allowed to be the lead coach of an age group.
- The club will encourage and help all coaches stay up to date with rugby coaching and child protection issues.
- All coaches will be given a copy of the club's code of conduct for coaches and they will be expected to operate within the codes of conduct at all times.
- A person will be identified to the coaches whose role it is to deal with any concerns about any form of abuse identified. (The Child Safeguarding Officer or nominated officer).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CLUB WITH REGARD TO THE CLUBS CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

- All members of the club will be made aware of the existence of the club's child protection policy/and the codes of practice.
- A copy of the child protection policy and codes of practice will be made available to any person who so requests to see it.
- The club will ensure that all necessary persons will have a copy of the code of practice that relates to them.
- The National Governing body has a duty to support the club's child protection policy. As such they publish leaflets of guidance in respect of child welfare. These must be made available on request to all members of the club and any other persons.