Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

DEFINITIONS

"Adult" means any person aged 18 years and over.

"Age Grade Rugby" A player's age grade is determined by their age at midnight on 31st August at the beginning of each Season and that age grade applies for the whole Season. Players must play in their own age grade unless permitted to play outside their age grade in the limited circumstances set out in these regulations. Players move to their new age grade from 1 August each Season.

"Bar" means a restriction imposed on an individual's or Club's involvement in Rugby Union on such terms as may be determined by the RFU in accordance with this Regulation. "Barred" means subject to a Bar.

"CB Safeguarding Manager" means a person designated to manage safeguarding at a Constituent Body.

"Child" means a person under the age of eighteen years as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and 'Children' people under the age of 18.

"Club Safeguarding Officer" means a person designated to manage safeguarding at a Club.

"DBS" means the Disclosure and Barring Service.

"DBS disclosure" means a DBS disclosure issued by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) - including any renewal Disclosures.

"DBS cleared" means a person whose DBS disclosure has been cleared by the RFU.

"Harm" means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another as defined by the

"Policy" means the RFU's Safeguarding Policy, Guidance and Procedures (as amended from time to time) and the RFU Safeguarding Adults at Risk in Rugby Union Policy and Procedures or any other successor policies and procedures for the safeguarding of Children and vulnerable adults. These Policies are binding on all those involved in Rugby Union.

"Position of Trust" means a person in a position of authority over another person as defined by Child Protection in Sport Unit: https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/best-practice/abuse-of-positions-of-trust-within-sport/
Childrens Act 1989 and, in relation to adults the Care Act 2014.

"Regulated Activity" means the statutory definition of the term as set out in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended) that for the RFU's purposes shall be construed as meaning: (i) any coaching and training of children; and/or (b) any teaching, instruction, care or supervision of children, carried out by the same person frequently (once a week or more often), or

on four or more days in a 30 day period, or overnight. For more detailed information and examples of what constitutes Regulated Activity, please see the Policy.

"RFU Safeguarding Team" means the team of executive staff within the RFU that is responsible for safeguarding. All other Definitions used in these Regulations will bear the same meaning as those set out in RFU Regulation 1.

1.0 GENERAL STATEMENT

1.1 SRFC recognises the need to protect all children involved within the sport and vulnerable adults within the game. SRFC has laid out a safeguarding policy to protect those from harm and abuse in all levels of the sport

1.2 SRFC adopts and adheres to the RFU Safeguarding regulation 21, where procedures, practice and guidelines are endorsed and adopted by all those involved within SRFC and the sport.

1.3 The Vulnerable Adult safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

•Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)
•Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
•Is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect, as a result of those care and support needs

1.4 Key principles laid within "RFU Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults in Rugby Union Policy & Guidance – Creating Safer Environments" define that:

- All participants regardless of age, gender, ability or disability, race, faith, culture, size, shape, language or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse or harm.
- All allegations or suspicions of abuse, neglect, harm and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately.
- Working in partnership with other organisations, statutory agencies, parents, carers, children and young people is essential for the welfare of children and young people.
- Children have a right to expect support for personal and social development delivered by an appropriately recruited and vetted individual. They will be managed in relation to their participation in rugby union, whether they are playing, volunteering or officiating in the community or professional areas of the sport.
- The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult (as appropriate) is, and must always be paramount to any other considerations.

1.5 SRFC recognises that all children have the right to participate in sport in a safe, positive and enjoyable environment whilst at the same time being protected from abuse, neglect, harm and poor practice. Somerton RFC recognises that this is the responsibility of everyone involved, in whatever capacity, at the club.

1.6 SRFC will therefore implement and comply with the RFU and SRFC code of conduct for coaches, spectators officials and members

1.7 SRFC will ensure all those involved within the club and the sport whether they are coaches, members, visitors, officials, players or spectators comply with the Code of Conduct. The following behaviours are not acceptable but not limited to. Those who are found to breech these behaviours will be taken seriously by the club and may be subjected to reporting to CB and RFU Safeguarding Team. The club has the right to carry out further disciplinary measure on a case by case basis.

- Working alone with a child, children, vulnerable adult, or adults.
- Consuming alcohol whilst responsible for children or vulnerable adults.
- Consuming or being under the influence of drugs whilst being responsible for children or vulnerable adults

- Providing alcohol to children or allowing its supply.
- Smoking in the presence of children.
- Humiliating children or vulnerable adults.
- Inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a child or vulnerable adult.
- Participating in, or allowing, contact or physical games with children or vulnerable adults.
- Having an intimate or sexual relationship with any child or vulnerable adult developed as a result of being in a 'position of trust.'
- Using social medial to abuse, offend children or vulnerable adults. This may include images, videos, comments or posts relating to racial abuse, abuse of match official, breach of RFU reg 15, committed by those who hold a 'position of trust' within or outside the sport.
- Making sexually explicit comments or sharing sexually explicit material.

2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 The Volunteer, Coach and Employee:

2.1.1 Works towards creating a safe, friendly and welcoming environment and treats children with respect in accordance with the core values
2.1.2 Understands and complies with their club's safeguarding policy
2.1.3 Follows all guidance in this document when working with children, Vulnerable Adult
2.1.4.Completes any training considered appropriate for their role
2.1.5 Those members of the children's workforce working in Regulated Activity are subject to an enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information processed and cleared by the RFU, in accordance with RFU Regulation 21.

2.2 The Club:

2.2.1Appoints a Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO), as the first point of contact for safeguarding and welfare concerns
2.2.2 Ensures that the CSO:
- is a member of, or attends the appropriate club committees making safeguarding issues a priority at the proper level; and
- works in accordance with the Safeguarding Toolkit

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

2.2.4 Promotes best practice throughout the club
2.2.5.Completes annual Safeguarding Self Audit by the date highlighted in Regulation 21
2.2.6 Informs all members, parents and children when a new CSO is appointed
2.2.7 Publishes the club's own safeguarding policy which reinforces the RFU Safeguarding Policy and procedures which reflects the unique local circumstances for that club and makes it accessible to all member
2.2.8 Ensures all club officers and committee members are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities
2.2.9 Ensures that at any youth disciplinary panel, the CSO supports the child/ Vulnerable Adult and ensures the panel considers the child/Adult's emotional wellbeing throughout following the RFU 2.2.10 Guidance available for achieving best evidence for child witnesses
2.2.11 Identifies any signs of harm or concerns and reports them to the CBSM and/or the RFU Safeguarding Team
2.2.12 Ensures that the club's Children's Workforce have up-to-date DBS checks in accordance with Best Practice Guidance and Regulation 21

3.0 IDENTIFYING ABUSE IN CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

3.1 SRFC recognises how to identify abuse within children and adults contained within the following documents:

https://rfu.widen.net/s/m92bdqphgh/rfu-safeguarding-children-policy-2022

https://rfu.widen.net/s/fwttt2xxlw/rfu-safeguarding-adults-in-rugby-union-policy-and-procedures

3.2 Physical abuse. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

3.3 Sexual abuse. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative sexual acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual photographic or online images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via text or the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

3.4 Emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate.

3.5 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 or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

3.6 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 (online bullying sometimes referred to as cyberbullying).

3.7 Poor Practice. Poor practice arises 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. Clubs which allow poor practice to go unchallenged may find that their culture is one which allows abuse to exist and be accepted as the norm.

4.0 REPORTING OR SHARING A CONCERN

4.1 There are several ways people can share their concerns:

- If the child whom you have concerns about is in immediate danger or needs medical attention, call 999 as soon as possible
- If you're a parent or volunteer, you should share your concerns with your Club Safeguarding Officer via contact details around the club or safeguarding@somertonrfc.co.uk

- If neither of those options is available, you should contact the RFU Safeguarding team, via safeguarding@rfu.com as soon as possible
- If you are ever unsure of who you need to contact, you can call the NSPCCon 0808 800 5000, which operates between 10:00 AM and 16:00 PM Monday to Friday
- Or you can contact the unmanned RFU Safeguarding line on 0208 831 6655 and a member of the Safeguarding team will respond to you within 24 hours

4.2 RFU Safeguarding Referral Form. The RFU Safeguarding Referral Form should be completed regarding any concerns you have or have been disclosed to you, relating to the behaviour of any child or adult involved in or spectating at your club. These may include general concerns about a child's welfare, concerns about bullying or poor practise, suspicions or allegations of misconduct, or allegations of abuse. To report concerns to the RFU Safeguarding team, please fill the form out and send it to safeguarding@rfu.com as soon as possible.

PLEASE REMEMBER IT IS EVERYONES RESPONSIBLY TO REPORT A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN NOT TO ACT OR DECIDE THE LEVEL OF RESPONSE ON YOU CONCERN

THE WELFARE OF THE CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT IS NUMBER 1

DO
- Stay Calm - do not rush into inappropriate action. React calmly in order not to alarm the young person.
- Reassure the child - that they are not to blame and confirm that you know how difficult it must be to confide.
- Listen sympathetically - to what the child says and show that you take them seriously.
- Keep questions to a minimum - the law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested. Only ask questions to clarify.
- Ensure you clearly understand what the child has said - in order that the information can be passed on to the appropriate agencies.
- Consult with the CSO's ensuring that all the information is accurate.
- Maintain Confidentiality - all incidents will be treated with an open mind and handled in a fair and equitable manner. Information will only be shared on a need to know basis. Confidentiality must be maintained until a case is proved.
- Ensure the safety of the young person - if urgent medical attention is required then call an ambulance, inform the doctors of your concerns and ensure that they are aware that this is a child protection issue.

DON'T
- Don't panic - or allow your feelings to be evident.
- Don't make promises you cannot keep - explain that you will need to tell other people.
- Don't make the child repeat the story unnecessarily.
- Don't delay. Don't speculate or make assumptions.
- Don't approach the alleged abuser.
- Don't take sole responsibility.

5.0 SPECIFIC AGE GRADE AND PLAYING OUT OF AGE GRADE

5.1 SRFC manages the changing facilities and arranges for them to be supervised by two DBS checked adults of the appropriate gender for the players using the facilities. SRFC ensures that all its coaches, parents, officials and spectators are aware that adults must not change at the same time, using the same facilities as children.

5.2 SRFC will comply with RFU Regulation 15.7 with respect to seeking annual approval from the Constituent Body (Somerset RFU) to allow 17 year olds to play adult rugby. The Club approval will be renewed annually and will consider the results of the Club's annual safeguarding audit. All 17 year olds wishing to play ion the adult team must be subject to an assessment iaw RFU Regulation 15.3 (playing up) and 15.4(playing down) and must have received approval from the Constituent Body:
https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/72c904bd6e4848cfbec0001a42e3ecd3

5.3 Minors (17 year olds) who receive an age grade dispensation to play for the adult team will be allocated separate changing facilities. They will not change or shower in the company of adult players. Such players will also have a nominated DBS cleared mentor to ensure the arrangements for their safety and welfare are correctly implemented and adhered to. These arrangements will include, but not be limited to:

- Having separate changing and showering facilities are available for both matches and training;
- They are allocated a DBS cleared mentor to supervise their engagement with the adult team and adherence of all to the necessary safeguarding measures;
- That the referee of the game is informed of their age and approval to play prior to kick-off;

5.4 Certain age grades are permitted to play up one or two age grades for training and playing if recommended by the player's club, school or college, as set out in the table at Regulation 15.5. **This is different from combining a whole age group of players, it is player specific. The conditions in the regulations must be read in detail and met in full.**

5.5 Any events held on SRFC premises must comply with this Policy and if appropriate a Safeguarding Plan should be discussed and circulated to those affected. Any tours, overseas or domestic, undertaken by Somerton RFC must comply with the relevant RFU Regulations and Guidance relating to tours.

5.6 SRFC will ensure that its coaches will receive the support and training considered appropriate to their position and role. The RFU "Managing Challenging Behaviour" Policy has been adopted and circulated amongst the club workforce both, voluntary and paid.

5.7 The use of mobile phones and/or photographic equipment should be always prohibited within the changing room and washroom facilities . Clubs should ensure all children are aware of this rule and the reason for it. If team photos are being taken, they should be done outside the changing rooms, with everyone appropriately dressed

6.0 PARENTAL ATTENDANCE AT RUGBY

6.1 All Parents are subject to SRFC code of conduct for parents and spectators

6.2 SRFC understands that due to certain events within the club may require parents to be present or not. While all parents/guardians should remain on the premises throughout a session, it is particularly important for children up to and including the age of under 11s. Parents play a big role in encouraging children to take part, and stay, in rugby

6.3 In most instances, it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians, not the club, to transport the child or adult to and from rugby activities, whether that be training or home and away matches. We recognise that parents make private arrangements between themselves to help manage collection duties. For example, this could include parents arranging to drop off their friend's children, or vice versa. These arrangements are made solely at the discretion of the parents and carers involved, and it would be best practice to ensure that coaches, and all staff/ volunteers involved in collection, are aware of such arrangements.

6.4 If parents/guardians make arrangements that involve their child being picked up or dropped off by someone other than themselves, they must then ensure that the club has sufficient contact details for them, as well as emergency and secondary contact details. If this occurs it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to inform the head coach for the child's age group

6.5 Late collection. If parents/guardians are late to collect their child, they should ensure they make every effort to contact the club to let them know of their delay, and when they are expecting to arrive. This should be done as soon as the parent/guardian is aware they are going to be late. We understand that this may not always be possible. However, clubs should ensure that they have appropriate emergency contact details, and secondary details, for all children and adults at risk.

7.0 PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

7.1Physical intervention is only permissible when it is absolutely necessary to prevent children being hurt. In these situations, you must:

- Stay in control of your actions
- Consider your own safety. Always protect yourself where appropriate
- Use your voice first Always try to diffuse a situation with words before physical intervention. If you must physically intervene, ensure you give a warning first
- Attend to your own player first. Physical intervention should be a last resort. If you feel that your player is at risk of harm, remove your player from the situation, rather than physically intervening with an opposition player
- Only use the minimal physical force to resolve the incident when necessary. This should be the minimum amount of force required, lasting for the shortest practical time. The purpose of this should be to restrain and reduce risk
- Avoid contact with buttocks, genitals and breasts. When intervening physically, make sure you avoid intimate areas of the body as well as the head and neck. This will significantly reduce the risk of an allegation of assault being made
- Never strike blows with an individual. When physically intervening to separate or restrain children, there is never a need for blows. Throwing blows during a physical altercation would significantly increase the risk of being accused of assault or aggression

Any form of physical intervention should be to achieve an outcome that is in the best interests of the child, or children, whose behaviour is of immediate concern. Physical intervention must never be used as a form of punishment, by anyone involved in the game. By keeping to these principles, you may mitigate the risk of allegations being made against you.

8.0 ENCOURAGING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

8.1 When responding to challenging behaviour, the adult's objective should be to encourage positive behaviour among children. The response must always be proportionate to the behaviour and actions imposed as soon as practicable, fully explained to the child and their parents/guardians, and be inclusive, rather than exclusive. When dealing with children who are displaying less than ideal behaviour, the coach and other supervising adults should consider the below Do's and Don'ts.

Do - Talk to the child and try to establish what the issue is. Perhaps they don't understand the instruction or objective, or are particularly tired, drained or stressed. Explaining a technique on a 1:1 basis or buddying the child up with someone who fully understands the technique can be useful methods.

Don't - Assume the problem rests solely with the child. Self-reflection is vital. Ask if you can factor in the individual needs of the child when planning sessions, if there is another way you could explain a task or how you could engage the child if they seem tired/ stressed.

Do - Be open to the fact that there might be more going on for this child – If the problem cannot be easily resolved in a discussion with the child, be mindful that there is usually a reason why a child is behaving differently to the rest of the group. If you suspect this is a deeper issue, please report it to your Club Safeguarding Officer detailing all the information you have.

Don't - Minimise any suspicions or concerns that you have if you think there is a deeper problem, or that you're seeing a child behaving out of character. Seek advice from the Club Safeguarding Officer, or the RFU Safeguarding team.

Do - Be open to the fact that the child might have additional needs – Some will have a formal diagnosis, others not. Some parents will already have disclosed this to the club, others not. If a child has additional needs that are affecting his or her behaviour, there can often be simple adjustments that will bring about improvements.

Don't - Assume that you must be an expert in additional needs to be able to manage a child with additional needs. Rugby can be a positive influence in the life of a child who might struggle in other areas.
Do - Speak to parents. Find out if the behaviour you are seeing also occurs at home, in school or in other activities. What measures do the parents use to manage this at home? Can this be replicated, or similar measures be implemented in rugby.

9.0 PHOTOGRAPHY AND USE OF IMAGERY

Please refer to SRFC policy on use of imagery, social media and data protection.

10.0 SAFEGUARDING AUDITS

10.1 The audit is mandatory for any club who offers Age Grade activities, or who wish to have 17-year olds playing up into the adult game, in line with Regulation 21.

10.2 The purpose is to enable easier monitoring of compliance in the Age Grade Game, the audit has been opened for clubs that GMS recognises as offering Age Grade activity.

10.3 Every year the Audit typically is completed between July and October during pre season. The audit is completed on GMS by the CSO. The audit is required for every club who offer age grade rugby and adult clubs who potentially have 17 year olds wishing to play up into the adult game the coming season.