



ENGLAND RUGBY

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Safeguarding Policy Statement

This policy sets out the Rugby Football Union's commitment to ensuring that every child who plays, watches or is involved in rugby union in England feels safe, is listened to and can enjoy the game. The welfare of the child is paramount in all decisions and actions taken. This commitment supports the ambitions set out in Plan 2030: More Than a Game, which explains how England Rugby will continue to enrich lives and grow the game for future generations.

The RFU is committed to making sure that everyone involved in rugby union understands their role in keeping children safe and that safeguarding is embedded in everything the game does. The standards set out in this policy must be upheld across rugby union in England.

Everyone involved in rugby union has a responsibility to help keep children safe. This includes a duty to report any concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child. By working together, the rugby community can ensure that the game is enjoyed safely by all children, wherever and however they take part.

The RFU seeks to minimise the risks that could lead to harm or abuse of any child in rugby union. This Safeguarding Children Policy exists to prevent, identify and respond appropriately to concerns relating to abuse, neglect and exploitation, including any conduct that may cause significant harm. It sets out how the RFU will safeguard children and what is expected of everyone involved in the game.

This policy applies to everyone involved in rugby union, whatever their role; whether picking up a ball for the first time, devoting a lifetime to the sport, dreaming of glory, roaring England home, or acting as a parent, coach, official or volunteer.

Guided by the Core Values of rugby, the following commitments set out how everyone involved in the game will work together to keep children safe from harm and abuse. Safeguarding is fundamental to the future of the game and to the trust placed in rugby by children and their families.

Together, we are committed to ensuring that safeguarding remains at the heart of rugby at every level of the game.

Thank you for playing your part in making rugby a safe, positive and enjoyable place for every child.

Bill Sweeney
Chief Executive Officer

Polly Williams
Board Champion for Safeguarding

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How This Policy Works in Practice

This Safeguarding Children Policy sets out the Rugby Football Union's commitment to keeping children safe and the principles that guide our approach across the game. It aligns with relevant UK safeguarding legislation and guidance, including Working Together to Safeguard Children.

A child is any person under the age of 18. This includes 17-year-olds who are playing up into the adult game.

To support this Policy, the RFU has developed a Safeguarding Handbook, which provides clear procedures, mandatory standards and practical guidance for Clubs, Constituent Bodies, Referee Societies and all those involved in rugby. This includes guidance on how to recognise concerns, how to report them, and what to do when worries arise.

All safeguarding concerns must be reported and managed in line with the processes set out in the Safeguarding Handbook and RFU Regulation 21.

Together, this Policy, the Safeguarding Handbook and RFU Regulation 21 form the RFU's safeguarding framework. The Safeguarding Handbook contains mandatory standards and procedures that must be followed and everyone involved in rugby union is required to understand and follow the relevant parts of this framework in line with their role.

If you are worried about a child, you must act. Guidance on how to report a concern is set out clearly in the Safeguarding Handbook. If you have immediate concerns about the welfare of a child, do not assume that someone else will take action - call 999 immediately.

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Safeguarding Principles

TEAMWORK

What you must do

- Take reasonable steps to keep yourself and others safe
- Report any worries or concerns, for yourself or others, especially if someone's behaviour makes you or others feel unsafe or could cause harm or fear, because, in our sport, everyone is welcome, whoever you are
- Support and look out for everyone who takes part in rugby union, including noticing when something doesn't feel right and acting on it

What we will do

- We will help everyone know how to keep themselves and others safe by providing clear information, training, and support, and by helping everyone in rugby to do the right thing
- We will work together across the game including clubs, Constituent Bodies, Referee Societies, committee members, staff, volunteers, and members to make sure we are all doing our part to keep rugby free from harm and abuse
- We will work in partnership with others, both within rugby and beyond the sport, to help create safer environments for children. This includes working with organisations such as the police and children's services and following relevant legislation and government guidance
- We will work in partnership with our member clubs, Constituent Bodies, Referee Societies and organisations both within and beyond rugby to continuously review, improve, and strengthen how we keep children safe

RESPECT

What you must do

- Follow this Policy, Regulations and your Code of Conduct, and act with respect and consideration towards others at all times, recognising and valuing differences
- Clubs, Constituent Bodies and Referee Societies should implement a Code of Conduct and ensure members follow it
- Create an environment where everyone feels able to speak up, including children and young people, if something is worrying them, makes them feel unsafe, or could be affecting others

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What we will do

- We are committed to listening carefully to anyone that comes forward to raise any worries or concerns, and we will provide support to those who speak out
- We will actively promote this Policy, Regulations and guidance to make sure everyone knows what their behaviour towards others should be like and we will take action when behaviour is not meeting these standards
- We will make sure that the voices of those taking part are heard when we plan and run activities such as training and competitions. This is especially important for children and young people. We want to make sure that everything we do gives everyone whatever their age, background, or ability the opportunity to enjoy rugby and do their best

ENJOYMENT

What you must do

- Have fun, make friends, and feel part of a great sport, no matter who you are
- Help others have fun too; be encouraging and supportive, and help make rugby a safe, inclusive and welcoming place for everyone to take part

What we will do

- We want to ensure that rugby feels fun, inspirational and meaningful for all, especially children who are the lifeline of the sport
- We will make sure that everyone who works or volunteers in rugby is suitable to help create a safe, positive and enjoyable environment
- We will make sure there are clear ways to talk about worries or report concerns, so if anyone feels unsafe, they know what to do and where to go for help
- We will celebrate good practice and those who work hard to keep rugby a safe and enjoyable sport

DISCIPLINE

What you must do

- Take responsibility for your behaviour and demonstrate self-control to help keep others safe
- Follow this Policy, Regulations and your Club, Constituent Body or Referee Society Codes of Conduct to make sure our sport is a safe place to be

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- Support others to follow this Policy, Regulations and Codes of Conduct, and tell us if you are worried that the rules are not being followed or someone may be unsafe

What we will do

- We will make it easy for people to raise safeguarding concerns, be they big or small, and ensure the right people and processes are in place to respond to them.
- We will take all concerns seriously, listen carefully to those involved and deal with concerns fairly, consistently and robustly.
- Where a concern identifies actual or potential harm to a child, we will act appropriately to safeguard children and reduce the risk of harm occurring again. RFU Regulation 21 explains how safeguarding concerns are managed and the actions that may be taken. In some cases, this may include removing an individual's involvement in rugby union.

SPORTSMANSHIP

What you must do

- When playing, volunteering, working or supporting behave in the right spirit, being honest, fair, and kind to others
- Recognise that success is not always about winning but about taking part
- Treat teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, and volunteers with respect and fairness, even when things do not go your way
- Look out for others and speak up if behaviour goes against the values of rugby or makes someone feel unsafe

What we will do

- We will promote positive behaviour and help everyone understand what good sportsmanship looks like in rugby
- We will support officials, coaches, and volunteers to challenge poor behaviour and to set a positive example
- We will take action when behaviour does not reflect the values of rugby union, so that the game remains safe, fair, and enjoyable for everyone

Policy Adopted by RFU Council, June 2026

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