**Portsmouth RFC Safeguarding Policy**

## Safeguarding Team Vision

## To ensure that Portsmouth Rugby Football club excels at all aspects of Safeguarding by creating a safe, positive, and enjoyable environment.

## Introduction:

Portsmouth RFC Safeguarding Policy has been written in conjunction with PRFC junior Committee, PRFC Senior Committee and the Rugby Football Union (RFU). The club is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults participating in rugby. All children, young people and vulnerable adults are entitled to protection from harm and have the right to take part in sport in a safe, positive and enjoyable environment. The Club is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people participating in rugby and is required by the RFU to have a Safeguarding Policy which must be published.

This document sets out both the club’s Safeguarding Policy and guidance for all volunteers and paid employees of the club. This policy and its guidance should be read in conjunction with Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults in Rugby Union Policy and Guidance (“the Guidance”).

All Officers, Committee members and others involved in volunteering at the club must be aware of their responsibilities in this area to ensure that the Club responds appropriately to any indication of poor practice or abuse in line with RFU Policy.

#### Key Principles:

The key principles on which this policy statement is based:

* The welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult 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 and suspicions of harm 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 & young people and vulnerable adults.
* The interests of those who work or volunteer with children & young people and vulnerable adults will be protected.

#### The Clubs Safeguarding Officers:

The club will appoint both a Club Safeguarding Officer and a Deputy CSO, the details of that appointment will be recorded on the RFU ‘Game Management System’ as well as the Club website.

The Club will ensure that the Club Safeguarding Officer receives the training that is appropriate and current for this role within the Club. The Club will ensure that the Safeguarding Officer has appropriate assistants in order to maintain quality of standards, should the need arise.

The terms of reference of the Club Safeguarding Officer will include the following:

* To ensure that the club has a Child Protection Policy and self-monitoring strategy.
* To ensure that the club’s Codes of Conduct are well publicised and adhered to.
* To ensure that the club is in consultation with the RFU Child Protection Officer, ensuring that all reported incidents are managed at the appropriate level in line with RFU procedures.
* To ensure that all relevant club members are aware of training opportunities.
* To ensure that all parents, children and young people are aware of the club’s policy on Child Protection / Welfare and the correct procedures and channels for voicing concerns.
* To ensure that all adults who have regular contact with young people undertake the disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
* Being aware of local Social Services and Local Safeguarding Children & young people's Board.
* Sitting on any relevant club committees
* To ensure that this policy and its procedures are reviewed annually & current legislation is adhered to.

**Safe Recruitment**

The Club is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Children are entitled to participate in rugby union activities in a safe and welcoming environment. Safer recruitment procedures will enable the club to reduce the risk of abuse to children, when recruiting employees or volunteers to the children’s workforce all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure only suitable people are selected.

The people who work in a rugby club are the most important asset a club has. A good and robust recruitment process is essential to ensure the best people are chosen for the roles they undertake. These must be people who are suited to the club and who are unlikely to harm children, intentionally or accidentally. A club which has good recruitment, induction and supervision processes shows those working there the value which is put on children’s safety and wellbeing.

Portsmouth RFC has adopted a robust recruitment process which is line with the RFUs procedures and will be applied to all new volunteers. This included a job description, interview, consideration as to an individual’s suitability for the role and planning for training and monitoring, in addition to carrying out the relevant E-Learning modules, mandated DBS check and obtaining and checking provided references. Official checks and vetting procedures are on their own, not enough to protect children. They are only part of a wider set of practices and an organisational culture which supports and promotes safe practice.

#### Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS):

All adults who have regular supervisory contact with young people at the club must ensure they have completed an enhanced and valid DBS check. This is done via the RFU and **MUST** be completed within eight weeks of their appointment to a position which involves regular supervisory contact with young people.

These adults will include:

* Professional Staff
* All coaches / assistant coaches
* Heads of Mini / Midi Rugby sections
* Heads of Youth Rugby Sections
* Team Managers
* All Referees who regularly officiate mini / midi and youth games
* Safeguarding Officers
* Physiotherapists
* Club administrators.

DBS disclosures must be conducted through the RFU Child Protection Department who have jurisdiction to deal with any matter arising from any such disclosure.

**Anti-Bullying**  
Portsmouth Rugby Football Club aims to create a safe and secure learning environment where individuals treat each other with respect and understanding. Bullying will not be tolerated at all at the Club and any claims of Bullying will be taken seriously, responded to promptly, and procedures followed to deal with the situation. It is the responsibility of every adult working in rugby union whether professional or volunteer, to ensure that all young people can enjoy the sport in a safe enjoyable environment. Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour which results in the victim feeling distressed. Bullying occurs when this behaviour is exercised through the use of power rather than an exchange between equals.

#### BEST PRACTICE:

It is the aim of the club as a Club that all young people enjoy the game in a safe enjoyable setting. The following sets out the Good Practice Procedures which all those involved in the delivery of the game of rugby union to young people at the club should adhere to.

The club publishes separately its Codes of Conduct for Match officials, Coaches, Players, Parents and Spectators. The following is supplementary guidance aimed at the club coaches and other club officials in order to ensure that all children & young people and young people and the individuals who work with them will enjoy the game in a safe environment.

When working with young people coaches and officials must adopt the following guidance:

#### Adult to Child Ratios

There should always be at least one DBS checked adult in charge of any group of children & young people. The RFU recommends a minimum ratio of adult to children & young people of:

* 1:10 for children & young people over 8 years old aged at least 9
* 1:8 for children & young people under 8 years old aged 7 and 8
* 1:6 for children & young people under 7 years old

**Location:**

* Coaches must always be publicly open when working with young people.
* They must avoid situations where the adult and an individual child are alone and / or unobserved, e.g. individual skill session after a team training session, providing lifts in cars to or from training.
* They must work in pairs and never alone with a group or individual, in a closed space.

### Contact Rugby:

* The wellbeing and safety of children & young people must 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 & young people 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 (see the RFU website for further information).
* A risk assessment on the conditions, players and apparent risks should be carried out by a person responsible for the overall session.
* There is further information available in the Guidance to Regulation 15 which also provides a variety of alternatives.

### Coaching Best Practice:

Coaches must place the well-being and safety of the player above the development of performance. This means that coaches must adhere to the following guidelines:

* Avoid overplaying of players (particularly talented players). All players need and deserve equal opportunity to play and to rest.
* Remember that children & young people/young people play for fun and enjoyment and that winning is only a part of it.
* Motivate youngsters through positive feedback and constructive criticism.
* Ensure that contact skills are taught in a safe, secure manner paying due regard to the physical development of young players.
* Never allow young players to train/play when injured. If unsure, err on the side of caution.
* Ensure equipment and facilities are safe and appropriate to the age and ability of the players.

### Coaching Qualifications:

* At least one coach per age group must hold a current RFU coaching award or a recognised award.
* At least 50% of all other coaches in the age group should hold a current RFU coaching award or be working towards one.
* Coaches must keep up to date with knowledge and technical skills and should be aware of their own limitations. Coaches must only work within the limitations of their knowledge and qualifications.
* Coaches must ensure that the activities which they direct or advocate are appropriate to the age, maturity and ability of the players.

### Coaching Techniques:

Any inappropriate (including sexual) or aggressive contact between adults and children & young people is unacceptable and a number of principles should 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 (Level 1 Coaching Award in Rugby Union)
* The reasons for physical contact should be explained wherever practicable so that children & young people and their parents are comfortable with this approach.
* Any contact or touching which is inappropriate (not directly related to the coaching context) or is aggressive is poor practice and is unacceptable. (See Appendix 4 of the RFU Guidance).

### Playing out of Age Grade

Playing a young person out of their age grade, either ‘up’ or ‘down’, requires careful assessment by an experienced and L2 qualified coach, as set out by the RFU in section 15.3.

* The ‘Age Grade Consent Form’ should be completed by the relevant parties in every instance of a permanent age grade change.
* The RFU should be informed of any children & young people who are playing out of their age grade.
* A parent or guardian should give consent to any club’s assessment for a child to play up or down an age grade; it is important that any identified extra risks are explained in the discussion with the parent.
* When assessing an U16 or an U17 for playing up two age grades, care is needed to be satisfied that the player is capable of doing so in the context of the planned playing and training programme.
* It is important to note that players yet to reach their 17th birthday must not play adult rugby or ‘engage in contact training with adults. Once a player has reached 17, they may play adult rugby provided the conditions of regulation 15.3.7 are met.
* Unless there is a significant physical difference, and subject to assessment, their inclusion in that age grade team is permitted.
* Age rules in a competition may preclude them from playing in that competition. It is therefore important to always read the competition rules carefully when your team contains a child with a dispensation in it.
* Managers or coaches of the opposition must be advised whenever a selected a player is “playing down”.
* Managers and coaches give each other at least 48 hours’ notice. Clear communication is key, and any decisions should be based around the players.

### 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 their 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 at 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 CSO or CBSM 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 should be recorded on the RFU Initial Issue/Concern Reporting Form which may be found on the Safeguarding pages of the RFU website and sent to the RFU’s Safeguarding Team.
* 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 & young people involved and never as a form of punishment.
* The above is written in conjunction with the PJRFC Minis & Youth Disciplinary Policy 2019.

### Changing Rooms:

* Adults and children & young people 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 & young people 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 & young people.
* For mixed gender activities separate facilities should be available.
* If the same facilities must be used by adults and children & young people on the same day a clear timetable should be established.
* No pressure should be placed on children & young people who feel uncomfortable changing or showering with others, if this is the case they should be allowed to shower and change at home.
* 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.
* Where mixed teams compete away from home, they must always be accompanied by at least one male and one female adult.
* Volunteers and professionals must respect the rights, dignity and worth of all and treat everyone with equality.

As part of the ‘best practice’ this policy and its overview will be made available to ALL parents

via the website & a ‘hard’ copy produced should any parent request this. (See Appendix 2 for the Web Page Content). All parents will be given both a ‘hard’ & ‘soft’ copy of the above including a specific contact list for the Safeguarding Team ensuring ease of access for all parents & coaches. The contact list will be displayed within the club.

#### Positions of Trust:

All adults who work with young people are in a position of trust which has been invested in them by the parents, the sport and the young person.

This relationship can be described as one in which the adult is in a position of power and influence by virtue of their position.

Sexual intercourse or touching by an adult with a child under the age of 16 years is unlawful, even where there is apparent consent from the child. A consensual sexual relationship between an adult in a position of trust within the rugby setting and a child over 16 years of age is contrary to the Policy & Guidance for the Safeguarding of Children & young people and Vulnerable Adults in Rugby Union.

Adults must not encourage a physical or emotionally dependant relationship to develop between the person in a position of trust and the young person in their care. All those within the Club have a duty to raise concerns about the behaviour of coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and professional staff which may be harmful to the children & young people, young people in their care, without prejudice to their own position.

**Prohibited Practices:**

Coaches, managers or volunteers including all professional staff must never:

* Take young people to their own home or any other place where they will be alone with them;
* Spend any amount of time alone with young people away from others.
* Take young people alone on car journeys, however short.
* If it should arise that such situations are unavoidable, they should only take place with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the Club and / or a person with parental responsibility for the young person. In exceptional circumstances where a coach, manager or volunteer cannot obtain the consent of someone in charge in the Club and / or a person with parental responsibility for the young person then if it is in the welfare interest of the young person, paragraphs (a) and (c) do not have to be followed. If this occurs the adult must record the occurrence with the Club/governing body Safeguarding Officer.
* Engage in rough, physical games, sexually provocative games or horseplay with children & young people/young people;
* Take part as a player in any dynamic contact games or training sessions with young people. If there is a need for an adult to facilitate learning within a coaching session through the use of coaching aids e.g. contact pads, this should be done with the utmost care and with due regard to the safety of the young players;
* Share a room with a young person unless the individual is the parent / guardian of that young person;
* Engage in any form of inappropriate sexual contact and / or behaviour;
* Allow any form of inappropriate touching;
* Make sexually suggestive remarks to a young person even in fun;
* Use inappropriate language or allow young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
* Allow allegations by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
* Do things of a personal nature for a young person that they can do for themselves unless you have been requested to do so by the parents / carer (please note that it is recognised that some young people will always need help with things such as lace tying, adjustment of Tag belts, fitting head guards and it is also recognised that this does not preclude anyone attending to an injured / ill young person or rendering first aid):
* Apart from the rugby Club or agreed rendezvous point until the safe dispersal of all young people is complete;
* Cause an individual to lose self-esteem by embarrassing, humiliating or undermining the individual;
* Treat some young people more favourably than others
* Agree to meet a young person on their own on a one to one basis.

**POOR PRACTICE AND THE CLUB DISCIPLINARY PANEL:**

Poor practice is defined as any behaviour which contravenes the club or RFU Codes of Conduct (Fair Play Codes) or RFU Guidance for Good Practice.

Once an incident is reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer, he/she should consult with the RFU Child Protection Officer in order to ascertain whether the allegation is to be investigated/dealt with as poor practice, bullying or abuse.

Should the incident have been identified by the RFU as poor practice and in consultation with senior club officials (Club Chairman / Youth Chairman / Honorary Secretary) a decision will be made whether or not to suspend, temporarily, the person accused. Each case will be considered on its merit.

A Club Disciplinary hearing may be called. The panel should be made up of three club members with regard to the following criteria:

* No person who has been involved in bringing the case to the disciplinary hearing should sit on the panel.
* Senior management of the club must be represented – normally by the Honorary Secretary or Chairman.
* As the case relates to poor coaching practice, experience in this field must be represented.
* The CB Welfare Manager can be invited.
* The accused will be advised of receipt of the report and provided with both copies of the reports and all witness statements.
* The accused will be invited to attend any disciplinary hearing.
* The accused must be given sufficient advance notice of the disciplinary hearing.
* The accused must be given the opportunity to offer his / her side of the events and call witnesses.
* Once the disciplinary panel reaches a decision it should be communicated to the accused and confirmed in writing and to the parents of the young person.
* A copy of the finding must be sent to the CB Welfare Manager and RFU Child Protection Officer.

The possible outcomes of a Club Disciplinary Panel may include the following:

* Permanent or Temporary suspension.
* Person may only coach whilst supervised.
* Coach must undertake RFU/RFUW Safeguarding and Protecting Young People Course.
* Coach must attend SCUK Good Practice and Child Protection Course.
* Coach must attend appropriate RFU / RFUW Coaching Course.

See the PJRFC Minis & Youth Disciplinary Policy 2019/2020 for full details.

# The club ‘Concerns’ Guidance

##### How to react to concerns about the welfare and safety of children & young people and vulnerable adults:

Safeguarding vulnerable people 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 vulnerable adult, or the behaviour of an adult.

Harm in the context of this policy is an action or behaviour which has a detrimental effect on a child or vulnerable adult’s physical or emotional health or wellbeing. Harm is often referred to as neglect, abuse or bullying.

In the case of vulnerable adults there is an additional category of abuse relating to financial matters, this includes: theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Harm may start as poor practice, which might include: shouting, excessive training, ignoring health and safety guidelines, failing to adhere to the club’s 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.

**Signs of harm:**

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

* Changing their usual routine.
* Beginning to be disruptive during the session.
* 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 & young people.
* 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 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 and the RFU Safeguarding Incident Report Form is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Your concerns should also be reported to the Royal Borough of Kingston’s **‘SPA’** (Single Point of Access) team (see Appendix for Contact details). The **SPA** team co-ordinate concerns from all agencies & concerns from the public. They will advise the CSO on how to proceed within this borough & with the evidence displayed to them.

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 or vulnerable adult 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 or vulnerable adult must pass these on to the CSO as soon as possible.

If they feel the child is in immediate risk of abuse, then a statutory agency (local children & young people’s services or the police) should be contacted immediately. If a vulnerable adult is at risk of abuse, their consent to the statutory agencies being contacted should be obtained, if possible before doing so.

**Photographic Images**

The RFU welcomes the taking of appropriate images of children in rugby clubs and has developed guidance for parents/carers and the children’s workforce, which is available in the Safeguarding Toolkit, to enable suitable photographs to be taken celebrating the core values of the sport. There are risks associated with the use of photographic images. RFU Guidance on photographic images and professional photography is based on common sense. Clubs are advised to ensure that everyone is fully aware of, and complies with, the guidance. The key principle is that clubs should ensure they obtain parental consent for photographs to be taken while a child is either at the club or at away fixtures.

**Sharing of Electronic Material/Media**

Clubs and CBs should be made aware of the advice contained in the Cyber-Guidance, available in the Safeguarding Toolkit. Websites can be a positive way to communicate with children. However, there are risks associated with internet usage. Rugby clubs are legally responsible for their website content and there should be nothing included which could harm a child, directly or indirectly. It is important to note that it is not acceptable to share sexually explicit or inappropriate material via any form of media with children; such behaviour may constitute a criminal offence. The online environment is ever-changing; therefore, the guidance is reviewed as necessary.

**On Tour**

This policy applies 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 would apply to those on bedtime or other supervisory duties. For more detailed guidance please read the Safeguarding Toolkit and Touring with Children (A Safeguarding Guide) which may be found at: http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/ General/General/01/31/70/61/Safeguarding Updates\_ RFU\_Version3\_colour\_English.pdf

#### Legal framework:

The following legislation was taken in to account during the writing of this policy:

###### Primary legislation:

* Children & young people Act (1989 s47)
* Protection of Children & young people Act (1999)
* Data Protection Act (1998)
* The Children & young people Act (Every Child Matters) (2004)
* Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

###### Secondary legislation:

* Sexual Offences Act (2003)
* Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
* Equalities Act (2010)
* Data Protection Act (1998) Non Statutory Guidance

###### Further Guidance:

* Working Together to Safeguard Children & Young people (revised HMG 2018)
* What to do if you are Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG 2006)
* Framework for the Assessment of Children & young people in Need and their Families (DoH 2000)
* The Common Assessment Framework for Children & young people and Young People: A Guide for Practitioners (CWDC 2010)

Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children & young people under section 11 of the Children & young people Act 2004 (HMG 2007)

**APPENDIX 1**

**PJFRC Safeguarding Contact Lists:**

PJRFC Club Safeguarding Officer – Matt Mitchell (Mitch) 0774016827

PJRFC Assistant Club Safeguarding Officer – Malcolm Ponsford

PJRFC Rugby Safe Officer – Laura Price

Safeguarding email address - safeguardingprfc@gmail.com

**Other Safeguarding Contact Lists**

**RFU Child Protection Helpline 24hr Answer phone**

0208 831 6655

(non-emergency)

Email: [childprotection@rfu.com](mailto:childprotection@rfu.com)

**RBK SPA (Single Point of Access) Tel:** 020 8547 5008

**Email:** [SPA@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:SPA@kingston.gov.uk)

##### LADO (Local Area Designated Officer) For Portsmouth

TBC

##### Safeguarding concerns or queries

0208 831 7479

[rmg@therfu.com](mailto:rmg@therfu.com)

##### DBS queries

0208 831 7454

[crbeapp@therfu.com](mailto:crbeapp@therfu.com)

##### Safeguarding training courses

0208 831 7987

[rusafe@therfu.com](mailto:rusafe@therfu.com)

##### NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/)

##### Child Protection in Sport Unit

0116 234 7278

[www.thecpsu.org.uk](http://www.thecpsu.org.uk/)

##### ChildLine

0800 1111