

Safeguarding Procedures

Overview

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 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.

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- Becoming withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence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

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What to do if you have concerns

The 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 Initial Issue/Concern Reporting Form is the most appropriate way of doing this. The Reporting Form may be found on the Safeguarding pages of the RFU website. 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 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.