

# The RFL Safeguarding Policy

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Every effort has been made by the RFL to ensure the accuracy of this information at the time of going to press. This Policy is meant as general advice and in specific situations the reader is advised to contact the RFL Safeguarding team or take further advice if necessary. Where a synopsis of the Operational Rules is given the full Operational Rules as published by the RFL from time to time take precedence.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The RFL would like to thank the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) for their support and guidance. Special thanks also to the other sports whose work in this field has been a valuable source of information and inspiration, in particular, the Football Association and the England and Wales Cricket Board.

Ian Cooper, the former Chief Executive of BARLA, should also be credited as the major driving force behind the original RFL Child Protection Policy on which this publication is based.

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## CONTACT DETAILS

### RFL SAFEGUARDING TEAM

Red Hall  
Red Hall Lane  
Leeds LS17 8NB  
  
0844 477 7113 option 6  
safeguarding@rfl.uk.com  
www.rfl.uk.com

### CPSU

NSPCC National Training Centre  
3 Gilmour Close  
Beaumont Leys  
Leicester LE4 1EZ  
  
0116 234 7278  
cpsu@nspcc.org.uk  
www.thecpsu.org.uk

### NSPCC

Child Protection Helpline  
0808 800 5000



## FOREWORD

I am delighted to provide the foreword for this revised and updated policy which explains the RFL's work in the area of Safeguarding and Protecting all individuals who participate in Rugby League.

This aspect of our organisation's activities is extremely important to us as we constantly strive to ensure that our sport offers a safe, suitable and effective environment for everybody.

Our Safeguarding training programmes are delivered at all levels of the sport and via the network of Club Welfare Officers. This structure has recently been expanded and enhanced by new communication procedures including a monthly newsletter to raise awareness of Safeguarding issues.

We have also recently implemented a significant increase in the number of Criminal Records Bureau checks carried out on people coming into contact with children and vulnerable adults within Rugby League.

The RFL has previously been awarded the Intermediate Standard in Safeguarding by the NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit and is working hard to achieve the Advanced Standard.

We will continue to work hard to strengthen all aspects of our Safeguarding activities so that Rugby League continues to be a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

I trust you find this Policy a useful reference document and I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those people who support the RFL's work in this area.

Richard Lewis

RFL Executive Chairman

July 2008

## INTRODUCTION

Sport can and does have a very powerful and positive influence on people – especially children. Not only can it provide opportunities for enjoyment and achievement; it can also develop valuable qualities such as self-esteem, leadership and teamwork. These positive effects can only take place if sport is in the right hands - in the hands of those who place the welfare of all children first and adopt practices that support, protect and empower them.

The reality is that abuse, not only sexual abuse but physical and emotional abuse, as well as bullying, does take place in sport although rarely; and in some cases coaches and other trusted adults in sport have been convicted.

The RFL is committed to working in partnership with all agencies to ensure that information and training opportunities are available to ensure and promote best practice when working with children. Adopting best practice will help to safeguard these participants from potential abuse as well as protecting coaches and other adults in positions of responsibility from allegations of abuse. The RFL Safeguarding Policy and Implementation Procedures will allow children to excel in a safe environment and transmit a reassuring signal to parents that will positively impact on participation.

This document is binding for the game as a whole and provides guidelines to everyone in Rugby League, whether working in a professional or voluntary capacity.

It is recognised that child abuse is a very emotive and difficult subject, however everyone in Rugby League has a duty of care towards children and other vulnerable players and officials and can help to protect them from abuse.

NB Throughout this document the term child is used to cover the following groups – children, young people and vulnerable adults.

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

### 1.1 POLICY STATEMENT

Every child who plays or otherwise participates in Rugby League should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in rugby league.

The RFL recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children by protecting them from physical, emotional or sexual harm and from neglect or bullying.

The RFL is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all children to participate in the sport to the best of their abilities for as long as they choose to do so.

The RFL recognises that all children have a right to be protected from abuse irrespective of their age, gender, culture, disability, race, faith, religious belief and/or sexual orientation.

The child's welfare is paramount and will be put before other considerations such as winning matches or the success and achievement of adults or clubs or representative teams.

The RFL recognises that abuse and poor practice does take place in sport and that raising awareness and understanding of the main forms of abuse and poor practice and encouraging reporting if abuse or poor practice is suspected, will further safeguard children participating in Rugby League.

### 1.2 KEY PRINCIPLES

- Every adult has a moral and statutory duty for the care, custody and control of any child under the age of 18 under their supervision
- The child's welfare is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, disability, faith, gender, race or sexual orientation have the right to be protected from abuse
- All incidents, allegations or suspicions of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All children have a right to play or otherwise participate in the game of Rugby League in a safe and enjoyable environment
- All children in this context includes, but is not limited to, players, officials & volunteers, match officials, ball boys & girls, cheerleaders and dancers, pre match entertainment participants, spectators and/or visitors.
- Children have a right to expect appropriate management, support, personal and social development with regard to their involvement in the game of Rugby League, whether they are playing, volunteering or officiating in the community or professional game
- All those involved in Rugby League will be provided with appropriate policies, training and support to ensure they are able to implement this policy.

### 1.3 SAFEGUARDING REMIT

Safeguarding has a broad remit within the game of Rugby League. All those involved in the management of children in Rugby League have a duty to ensure that all children are:

- Allowed access to the game in a way that is appropriate for their age and ability
- Coached and trained by appropriately qualified staff
- Not required to play in so many games, or to attend training sessions, as to become a threat to their physical or emotional well being - Not subjected to sexual abuse

- Not subjected to neglect
- Not subjected to poor practice
- Encouraged to achieve their full potential at all levels
- Instructed and set examples about how to behave, both on and off the pitch
- Afforded respect in any playing and training situation and any other Rugby League environment.
- Supported by the RFL, in partnership with other agencies and community groups, to achieve the outcomes identified in the government's 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' strategy. This strategy aims to improve outcomes for all children and, through a lengthy consultation process with young people and families, identified the following key outcomes for all children and young people:
  - Be healthy - physical, mental and spiritual health and well-being
  - Stay safe - protection from harm and neglect
  - Enjoy and achieve - education, training and recreation
  - Make a positive contribution - the contribution made by them to society
  - Achieve economic well-being - social and economic well-being

#### 1.4 INCORPORATION

The RFL Safeguarding Policy and associated policies and procedures have been adopted by the whole game. All individuals involved in Rugby League in England and Wales at every level, including but not limited to players, match officials, coaches, administrators, club officials, agents and spectators and all are bound to abide by this Policy, by the RESPECT Code of Conduct, by the Rugby League Coach's Code of Conduct and by any other applicable Code of Conduct published by the RFL. All such individuals by participating or being involved in Rugby League are deemed to have assented to and as such recognise and adhere to the principles and responsibilities embodied in this Policy & the Codes.

#### 1.5 SAFEGUARDING RULES

The updated Safeguarding Regulation (Appendix 3) has been adopted by the RFL, its Members and any other relevant body in England and Wales and participation, officiating, spectating or any other involvement in the game in England and Wales is dependent on acceptance of the Rules and this Policy. To ensure clarity and consistency in the matter of issues relating to Safeguarding, BARLA has delegated responsibility to the RFL.

#### 1.6 DEFINITIONS & ASSUMPTIONS

The guidance given in the procedures is based on the following principles:

- Child - This policy recognises and builds on the legal and statutory definitions of a child, the distinction between ages of consent, civil and criminal liability are recognised but in the pursuit of good practice in the delivery and management of Safeguarding in Rugby League, a child is recognised as being under the age of 18 years (Children's Act 2004 definition).
- Vulnerable Adult –refers to all those adults (over 18) who have a physical disability, are suffering from mental illness, have a learning disability or who, through illness or injury, are unable to provide adequately for themselves at a given point in time.
- Throughout this policy any reference to a child also applies to a young person or vulnerable adult unless otherwise stated.
- Confidentiality should be upheld in line with the Data Protection Act 1984 and the Human Rights Act 2000

with the rider that the welfare of the child is paramount.

- The term "parents" used throughout this document as a generic term to represent parents, carers and guardians.
- The term "club" is used throughout this document as a generic term to represent any Rugby League agency in charge of players under the age of 18 years or vulnerable adults and includes but is not limited to Service Areas, representative sides and Match Officials Societies.
- "Members" shall mean those organisations which are members of the RFL from time to time as listed in the RFL Memorandum of Association.

#### 1.7 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The RFL's approach to Safeguarding is based on the principles recognised within UK and international legislation and Government guidance. The following has been taken into consideration:

- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DOH) 2006
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Sexual Offences (Amendments) Act 2000
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The Police Act 1997
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- The Every Child Matters strategy 2004
- Data Protection Act 1998

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFEGUARDING IN RUGBY LEAGUE

#### 2.1 WHO HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFEGUARDING IN RUGBY LEAGUE?

The RFL and all individuals, clubs, leagues, societies, associations and other agencies involved in Rugby League will:

- Accept the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures to provide a duty of care for children, safeguard their wellbeing and protect them from abuse and poor practice
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children
- Recruit, train and supervise its employees and volunteers so as to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse, and themselves against false allegations
- Require all staff and volunteers to adopt and abide by the Safeguarding Policy, the RESPECT Code of Conduct and the Rugby League Coach's Code of Conduct

- Respond to any allegations appropriately
- Report all concerns, allegations or disclosures to the RFL
- Recognise that it is the responsibility of the Safeguarding experts and agencies to determine whether or not abuse has taken place but it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns
- Recognise that working in partnership with children, their parents and other agencies is essential for the protection of children
- Co-operate with the statutory bodies and/or the RFL in any investigation
- Recognise the statutory responsibility of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB) to ensure the welfare of children and work with the relevant LSCBs to comply with its procedures.

## 2.2 RFL SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

The role of the RFL Safeguarding Officer is to:

- Take the lead role in the development and establishment of the RFL's approach to safeguarding children, including reporting to the RFL Board and producing the RFL's Safeguarding Policy
- Manage cases of poor practice and/or abuse reported to the RFL and keep suitable records in accordance with Data Protection Act
- Manage referrals to Local Safeguarding Children Boards, Children's Social Care and Police as appropriate
- Be a central point of contact for internal and external agencies
- Represent the RFL at external meetings related to Safeguarding
- Co-ordinate dissemination of policy, procedures and resources throughout the organisation
- Provide advice and support to the Regional and Club Welfare Officers
- Advise on the RFL's Safeguarding training needs and develop a training strategy
- Maintain confidentiality in cases except where to do so would put a child at significant risk
- Maintain, roll out & review the RFL Safeguarding Plan
- Ensure 'Standards for Safeguarding & Protecting Children in Sport' (CPSU, 2002) are met
- Attend CPSU National Designated Officer 'Time to Listen' training.

A full job description is shown in Appendix 4.

## 2.3 REGIONAL WELFARE OFFICER

Regional Welfare Officers are in place for each of the main geographical areas in which the game is played and in many cases are linked to the regional playing league.

Regional Welfare Officers are appointed by the RFL, have been CRB\* checked at an enhanced level, are provided with a photo ID card and are trained and supported by the RFL. The role of the Regional Welfare Officers is to provide the following service within their region:

- Encourage and promote best practice
- Encourage roll out of CRB\* checking
- Ensure each club has an appropriate Club Welfare Officer in post
- Promote the RFL's education opportunities
- Act as a point of contact should a member of a club have a concern or query

- Refer concerns or queries to the RFL where appropriate
- Act as an important link between the RFL and the region
- Achieve Regional Welfare Officer 'Time to Listen' training.

## 2.4 CLUB WELFARE OFFICER

All clubs must identify a designated person to be titled the Club Welfare Officer (CWO) to handle Safeguarding issues. Before this person takes up their role they must be registered with the RFL, a process which includes undertaking an enhanced CRB\* check. Once clearance has been received from the RFL, a photo ID card will be issued to validate the appointment.

The CWO must have a formal role on the club's management committee and be supported by the management committee. The Club Welfare Officer will require support from the club, and designated training and support will be provided by the RFL. Clubs running a number of teams may need to appoint more than one CWO to ensure cover.

The role of the Club Welfare Officer is to:

- Ensure all coaches and significant others are CRB\* checked
- Attend the 'Safeguarding and Protecting Children' course
- Encourage Coaches to attend the 'Safeguarding and Protecting Children' course
- Act as first point of contact for coaches, parents or children who may have concerns
- Report any concerns to the RFL
- Ensure the relevant club personnel are informed of any necessary information the RFL send out.
- Attend RFL Club Welfare Officer 'Time to Listen' training.

The CWO should have the following knowledge:

- Basic knowledge of core legislation, government guidance and national framework for Safeguarding
- Basic knowledge of roles and responsibilities of statutory agencies (Children's Social Care, Police and Local Safeguarding Children Boards).
- Knowledge of the local arrangements for managing Safeguarding and reporting procedures.
- Be able to identify poor practice and abuse – behaviour that is harmful to children.
- Rugby League's role and responsibilities to safeguard the welfare of children – boundaries of the Club Welfare Officer role, e.g. it is not the CWO's role to investigate allegations ; it is the duty of the CWO to report concerns in line with the RFL reporting procedures.
- Awareness of confidentiality issues especially when disclosure made and data protection
- Rugby League's policy and procedures related to Safeguarding children .
- Core values and principles underpinning practice.
- Awareness of equity issues and Safeguarding.
- Attend RFL Club Welfare Officer 'Time to Listen' training.

All of the above can be obtained through attending Safeguarding & Protecting Children training, RFL 'Time to Listen' training and via the regular RFL updates.

A full job description is shown in Appendix 4.

### 2.5 SERVICE AREA WELFARE OFFICER

All Service Areas must identify at least one designated person to be titled the Service Area Welfare Officer (SAWO) to handle Safeguarding issues. Before this person takes up their role they must be registered with the RFL, a process which includes undertaking an enhanced level CRB\* check. Once clearance has been received from the RFL, a photo ID card will be issued to validate the appointment.

The SAWO must have a formal role on the Service Area Steering Group and be supported by the Steering Group. The SAWO will require support from all organisations in the Service Area, designated training and support will be provided by the RFL.

The role of the SAWO is as the role of the Club Welfare Officer but within the Service Area structure. A full role description is shown in Appendix 4.

### 2.6 MATCH OFFICIALS SOCIETY WELFARE OFFICER

All Match Officials Societies must identify at least one designated person to be titled the Match Officials Society Welfare Officer (MOSWO) to handle Safeguarding issues. Before this

person takes up their role they must be registered with the RFL, a process which includes undertaking an enhanced level CRB\* check. Once clearance has been received from the RFL, a photo ID card will be issued to validate the appointment.

The MOSWO must have a formal role on the Match Officials Society Committee and be supported by the Committee. The MOSWO will require support from all members of the Society, designated training and support will be provided by the RFL.

The role of the MOSWO is as the role of the Club Welfare Officer but within the Match Officials Society structure. A full role description is shown in Appendix 4.

## BEST SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE IN RUGBY LEAGUE

### 3.1 DUTY OF CARE

Every person, club, league or other organisation in Rugby League has a duty of care to ensure the safety and welfare of any child involved in Rugby League or related activities, to safeguard them and protect them from foreseeable forms of harm.

Safeguarding involves all involved in Rugby League acknowledging that this duty of care exists and putting practical measures in place throughout the game to minimise the likelihood of foreseeable harm arising.

### 3.2 GETTING THE POLICIES & PROCEDURES IN PLACE

The following is a list of the fundamental duties of every Club to demonstrate this duty of care. Other organisations such as Service Areas, representative teams and Match Officials Societies must take the appropriate and relevant steps for their circumstances - the RFL will advise as required.

All clubs must:

- Constitutionally adopt the RFL's Safeguarding & Protecting Children & Vulnerable Groups Policy
- Define their Club's own Safeguarding Policy Statement
- Follow the RFL reporting procedures for concerns, allegations and disclosure

- Recruit, appoint and arrange for the training of a Club Welfare Officer who is the designated contact for Safeguarding issues
- Have a player information file to allow adults to exercise their duty of care in an emergency situation
- Adopt the RESPECT code of conduct
- Have a Safeguarding policy which everybody at the club understands and puts into practice on a daily basis.
- Ensure that the following policies & procedures exist within the Club:

#### Policies

- Safeguarding Policy (Appendix 5)
- Selection & Recruitment Policy (Appendix 6)
- Whistle Blowing Policy (Appendix 7)
- Health & Safety Policy ([www.rfl.uk.com](http://www.rfl.uk.com))
- Dressing Room Policy (Appendix 8)
- Anti Bullying Policy (Appendix A9)
- Equality Policy (Template 8)
- RESPECT (A1) & other Codes of Conduct
- 100% ME Anti-Doping Policy (Template 6)
- Confidentiality and Data Protection (Appendix 17)
- Managing Challenging Behaviour & the Use of Force

#### Procedures

- CWO appointed & supported by Committee
- Procedures for reporting concerns of abuse or poor practice child (Appendix 12)
- Complaints & disciplinary procedures (Appendix 13)
- System for collecting player information and parental consent (Template 2)
- A forum for children to express their views
- Information for parents and children (Leaflets from RFL or [www.rfl.uk.com](http://www.rfl.uk.com))
- Transport & away game/tour procedures (Appendix 14 & Template 11)
- Recruitment and Selection procedures (Appendix 6 & Templates 3, 4 & 5)

All of these policies and procedures are available in the appendices and templates or as downloads from the [www.rfl.uk.com](http://www.rfl.uk.com) (or on request from the RFL) either as completed documents or as templates for clubs to adapt to their own circumstances.



### 3.3 RECRUITMENT, EMPLOYMENT AND DEPLOYMENT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Anyone may have the potential to abuse children and some sex offenders have been known to use sport as a means to access and groom children in preparation for abuse, therefore all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that people who are potential perpetrators of abuse or are otherwise unsuitable to work with children and young people due to their sexual or other behaviours are prevented from doing so. It is also important to ensure that individuals who have a record of violence or an inability to control their temper or a record of domestic violence or abuse of drugs do not have access to children. However, having a criminal record does not necessarily prohibit you from working with children. The RFL are obligated to conduct thorough risk assessments on any CRB certificates that show disclosures. All staff involved in the risk assessment process are fully trained and carry out risk assessments in line with the provisions of the RFL Policy on the Rehabilitation of Offenders. It is essential that the same procedures are used consistently for all posts whether staff or volunteers are full time or part-time.

Under the legislation in place, all individuals working on behalf of, or otherwise representing, an organisation are treated as employees whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity.

All Rugby League clubs at all levels must use the recruitment procedures set out in detail in Appendix 6 and these should be followed for all recruitment whether of staff or volunteers. Clubs should remember that these procedures should be applied to people who are already involved in the club and subsequently take on a role which gives them greater access to children (for instance a club coach moving from open age to a junior team or a parent taking on a volunteering role within the club). Clubs should ensure that those staff and volunteers already involved in the game undergo the appropriate parts of the recruitment procedures in particular self disclosure and CRB\* checks, although these are only part of a safe and effective recruitment and selection procedure.

In particular pre appointment checks should be carried out including checking that the person is registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA\*) scheme, carrying out Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks through the RFL and taking up references. CRB checks must be completed every three years for existing staff. Coaching staff must have their qualifications checked and their coaching badge should be inspected and the number recorded. Coaches must also be reminded that they have agreed to abide by the Coaches Code Conduct (Appendix 2) and the RESPECT Code of Conduct (Appendix 1). Coaches (and volunteers where relevant) should be given copies of these documents.

Once volunteers and staff are in place it is essential that their behaviour and performance is monitored and feedback given (Template 4). Club Management should be sensitive to any concerns about poor practice or abuse and act on them at an early stage following the guidelines in this document. The Club management should also offer appropriate support, through liaison with the RFL Safeguarding Officer and/or the Regional Welfare Officer, to those who report concerns/complaints.

*\* As part of the implementation of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, all individuals who are currently required to undertake an enhanced CRB check will also be required to register as members of the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) scheme once this is rolled out in late 2009. The RFL Safeguarding Officer will ensure that information relating to this process will be disseminated to all clubs and designated persons once it becomes available to the RFL.*

### 3.4 GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

The following is a non exhaustive list of the general principles of good practice with children:

- Treating all children equally, and with respect and dignity
- Promoting a culture which ensures children are listened to and respected as individuals
- Always putting the welfare of each child first, before winning or achieving goals;
- Making rugby league fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play

- Ensuring that all disciplinary sanctions are proportionate to age and do not involve violent or physical punishment or humiliation
- Physical exertion, e.g. running around the pitch should not be used as a method of punishment
- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment (e.g. no secrets)
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance, both physical and emotional, with children
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process
- Not having sexual relationships with children at the club including 16 or 17 year olds if you are in a position of trust (this includes all coaches and other staff or volunteers at a club)
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children whilst undertaking any role within an RFL setting, promoting a healthy diet and condemning the use of illegal and performance enhancing substances

The appendices to this Policy cover specific best practice guidelines including those for coaching, travelling with children, changing rooms, photographic & DVD policy, medical/physio treatment of children and many more.

### 3.5 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Equality protects people from being discriminated against on the grounds of group membership i.e. gender, race, age, disability, religious beliefs, faith and sexual orientation. It is based on the legal obligation to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. For more information on relevant Equality legislation please contact the Equality and Diversity Manager at Red Hall.

Diversity is recognising, valuing and respecting the diversity of each individual. Diversity encompasses visible and non-visible differences which may include, but are not limited to, differences protected by anti-discrimination legislation.

All employees and volunteers should guard against making assumptions about an individual's identity based on stereotypes. As well as being inappropriate it can be very misleading making it less likely that a worker will be able to identify any problems or concerns or gain the trust and respect of the individuals that they are working with.

Why is a commitment to Equality and Diversity essential?

- 1 It is morally the right thing to do - both in terms of each individual's wellbeing and the wider reputation of the club as a safe and welcoming environment
- 2 It makes good business sense - if a club is seen to be inclusive, to challenge inequality and discrimination and to ensure the safety and well being of all participants – there will be increased participation particularly among under represented groups and a greater likelihood that participants will stay involved
- 3 Legal responsibility - if a child experiences discrimination, victimisation or harassment based on their gender, race, disability, religious beliefs, faith, age or sexual orientation the club could face legal proceedings which are costly in terms of possible fines as well as a damaging loss of reputation

### 3.6 EDUCATION

It is essential that a sufficient number of individuals within the club have a basic level of Safeguarding knowledge. The current course which gives this knowledge is 'Safeguarding and Protecting Children' (SPC.) This course is a sports coach UK course which can be used as a continuing professional development (CPD) element for coaches. SPC is strongly recommended for all volunteers and coaches who work with children.



The key learning outcomes of SPC are:

- To identify and recognise good practice and the implications for coaching
- Explore values and feelings in relation to child abuse and recognise the potential impact on how an individual would respond
- Recognise and respond to signs and symptoms of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and bullying
- To ensure individuals are confident enough to take appropriate action when necessary.

CWOs need more knowledge than other volunteers in order for them to be as effective as possible in fulfilling their role and responsibilities. This knowledge is imparted through the 'Time To Listen' (TTL) course. This course was designed by the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit and has been amended by the RFL to reflect practices within the game. Although this course is primarily aimed at CWOs, other volunteers are more than welcome to attend in order to increase their knowledge.

The key learning outcomes of TTL are:

- To be able to describe the key elements of legislation and guidance, which are relevant to their role in Safeguarding children's welfare
- To be able to define the specific roles and responsibilities of statutory agencies and Local Safeguarding Children's Boards, and how they will relate to these agencies in individual cases of poor practice and abuse
- To be able to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the Club Welfare Officer and it's relationship to the Regional Welfare Officer and RFL Lead Safeguarding Officer
- To give CWOs confidence in how their role will work in practice
- Understanding of the RFL reporting procedures.

Please contact the RFL Safeguarding Team for details of education opportunities.

### 3.7 MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Coaches & other volunteers may have to deal with challenging behaviour from the children or young people in their care. It is important that those involved in youth and junior Rugby League are aware of the RFL's Policy for Managing Challenging Behaviour which is attached at Appendix 18.

This Policy aims to encourage good practice, suggest some strategies and sanctions which can be used and identify unacceptable sanctions or interventions which must never be used.

The Policy is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All those involved in the sport including children, coaches & volunteers should have clear guidelines about the standard of behaviour which is expected and the processes for dealing with behaviour which is unacceptable
- Children must never be subject to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading
- Some children's behaviour may be caused by medical or psychological conditions. Coaches & volunteers may need additional help including discussing the child's needs with parents and/or carers and possibly from external agencies that already support that child
- Rugby League can be a beneficial experience for all children and children should only be excluded from the sport in exceptional cases.

## ABUSE &/OR POOR PRACTICE

### 4.1 RECOGNISING ABUSE &/OR POOR PRACTICE

It is essential that all adults involved with children in Rugby League understand what constitutes abuse and/or poor practice and how to recognise it and how to respond to disclosures and allegations (see Section 5). Abuse and poor practice are very emotive and difficult subjects, however it is important that they are discussed openly at clubs as this helps create an environment where people are more aware of the issues and sensitive to the needs of children. This open environment also gives people more confidence in recognising abuse and /or poor practice and reacting to it.

Child abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. The staff and volunteers in Rugby League, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, are not experts at such recognition. However, they do have a responsibility to act if they have any concerns about the behaviour of someone (an adult or another child) towards a child and to follow the procedures set out in Section 5 of this document.

### 4.2 AWARENESS OF INCREASED VULNERABILITY TO ABUSE

All those involved in rugby league need to be aware that some children can be more vulnerable to abuse because of their needs and background.

#### 4.2.1 CHILDREN - DISABILITY

Disabled Children may be more vulnerable to abuse because they may:

- Require intimate personal care
- Experience negative attitudes and abuse due to their disability
- May be ignored and excluded from activities if people fail to recognise that it is the barriers that society puts up which prevent their involvement not their disability per se
- May be dependent on their abuser for care
- Be less able to resist either verbally or physically
- Have a smaller network of friends to support and protect them
- Lack access to peer groups to discover what is acceptable behaviour
- Have significant communication difficulties including the use of sign language
- Be more likely to have their verbal or non verbal communication misinterpreted as relating to their disability rather than abusive experiences
- Have medical needs which may be used to explain abuse.

#### 4.2.2 CHILDREN - MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS

Children from minority ethnic groups may be more vulnerable to abuse because they may:

- Experience racism and racist attitudes
- Expect to be ignored by people in authority due to experience of institutionalised racism
- Be afraid of further abuse or racist abuse if they challenge others
- Be subjected to myths based on racial stereotyping

- Want to fit in and not want to make a fuss
- Be using or learning English as a second language and therefore find it more difficult to communicate.

#### 4.2.3 CHILDREN - RELIGION AND FAITH

Children from various religions and faiths may be more vulnerable to abuse because they may:

- Experience religious intolerance, fear or hatred based on their religious beliefs
- Be subjected to myths based on stereotypes
- Suffer bullying or assumptions about their commitment to the game due to their religious beliefs and practices
- Be discriminated against, harassed or bullied based on their actual or perceived religious beliefs due to fear of religious extremism.

#### 4.2.4 CHILDREN - SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Children are often aware of their sexuality from an early age and many children may already identify as being lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB). LGB Children may be more vulnerable to abuse because they may:

- Be subjected to homophobia - which includes bullying abuse or physical attacks
- Have their experiences as LGB children rendered invisible by heterosexist attitudes and assumptions which assumes that everyone is heterosexual and that this is preferable to being gay.

#### 4.2.5 CHILDREN - GENDER

When thinking about danger signs of grooming it is important to recognise that although more girls are groomed and/or sexually abused, this can also happen to boys. Girls in Rugby League may be subjected to bullying by boys and other girls with assumptions made relating to their sexuality or sexual orientation because of their involvement in playing a competitive contact sport such as Rugby League. Such assumptions or stereotypes are wholly inappropriate and should not be condoned as they may increase the vulnerability of some children to abuse.

It is important that both girls and boys are accorded the same levels of respect by all those working with them and should not be treated unequally because of their gender

#### 4.2.6 CHILDREN WHO TAKE ON LEADERSHIP ROLES

More and more children are taking on leadership and volunteering roles within Rugby League. This should be an enjoyable and positive experience. Unfortunately some adults (coaches, parents, volunteers) lose sight of the fact that an individual in a leadership role who is under 18 is still legally a child.

Many children, referees in particular, suffer verbal, physical and emotional abuse in leadership roles. This is unacceptable in Rugby League and the harm that is caused to these children needs to be recognised by adults within the game. Many young officials become disillusioned at best or suffer a significant and lasting loss of confidence when faced with verbal or emotional abuse of this nature. Some young match officials have even suffered physical abuse or threats from coaches and spectators which is unacceptable in Rugby League.

#### 4.2.7 REDUCING THE POTENTIAL FOR VULNERABILITY

Given the increased vulnerability of some groups of children it is important that clubs create a safe culture including:

- Finding ways of understanding and communicating with all children
- Ensuring best practice at all times in physical and health care
- Develop knowledge of the diverse cultures within which a club is based
- Respecting and valuing diversity
- Building relationships with parents and carers and include them in club activities
- Observing changes in mood, appearance and behaviour and discuss those concerns with families, carers, the CWO, the Regional Welfare Officer or RFL Safeguarding Officer if suspicions or concerns are significantly raised about the care or welfare of the child
- Acknowledging that disabled children are additionally vulnerable and that vigilance is essential
- Acknowledging that abusive behaviour directed towards a child who is carrying out a leadership role is not acceptable and reporting such behaviour to the RFL Safeguarding Officer as abuse or poor practice
- Ensuring that the RESPECT code of conduct is enforced at the club
- Making sure that all club officials set good examples of behaviour at all times

### 4.3 DEFINING ABUSE

Any person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or institutional or club environment by people known to them or more rarely by a stranger. Children can be abused by adults or by other children.

The effects of abuse can be extremely damaging and if allowed to continue or left unacknowledged may follow a person into adulthood. For instance a person who has been abused as a child may find it difficult to maintain stable or trusting relationships, may suffer from low self esteem or self harm, may become involved in drugs or prostitution, may attempt suicide and may inflict the same behaviour on to other children in future.

#### 4.3.1 CATEGORIES OF ABUSE

##### PHYSICAL ABUSE

A child is physically hurt or injured by an adult or an adult gives drugs or alcohol to a child.

##### NEGLECT

A child's basic physical needs are consistently not met or they are regularly left alone or unsupervised.

##### SEXUAL ABUSE

An adult or peer uses a child to meet their own sexual needs.

##### EMOTIONAL ABUSE

An adult persistently criticises, denigrates or puts unrealistic expectations on a child or subjects them to abuse due to their gender, race, age, disability, religion and faith and sexual orientation.

##### BULLYING

An adult or peer persistently or repeatedly uses hostile and/or intimidating behaviour towards a child.

Appendix 11 contains a detailed information sheet about categories of abuse and how to recognise them and Appendix 9 contains the RFL Anti Bullying Policy.

### 4.3.2 POOR PRACTICE

Poor practice is the term used to describe practice which falls below the standards expected to such an extent that a child's welfare is compromised and is where an adult's or another child's behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing concern to a child. In application of this Policy, poor practice includes any behaviour of a Safeguarding nature which contravenes the RESPECT Code of Conduct (Appendix 1) or Coaches Code of Conduct (Appendix 2), infringes an individual's rights and/ or is a failure to fulfil the highest standards of care. Poor practice is unacceptable in Rugby League and will be treated seriously and appropriate actions taken.

Some examples are likely to be:

- Insufficient care is taken to avoid injuries e.g. by excessive training or inappropriate training for the age or maturity, experience and ability of players;
- Giving continued and unnecessary preferential treatment to individuals and regularly or unfairly rejecting others e.g. singling out and focusing on the talented players or the coach's own children or not having a fair team selection policy; winning should not be the over-riding factor.
- Placing children in potentially compromising and uncomfortable situations with adults
- Allowing abusive or concerning practices to go unchallenged and unreported e.g. failing to deal with or report a coach who ridicules or swears at players who make a mistake during a match
- Ignoring health and safety rules
- Failing to adhere to the game's RESPECT or other codes of conduct
- Failing to act to prevent one child harming or abusing another
- Issuing disciplinary sanctions which are not proportionate to age and/or involve violent or physical punishment or humiliation

### 4.3.3 PRACTICE NEVER TO BE SANCTIONED

No one involved in the game should ever:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Share a room with a child
- Shower with a child
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- Allow allegations made by a child go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- Do things of a personal nature for children, young people or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves
- Take a child or children to their home where they will be alone with them.
- Invite or allow a child or children to stay with them at their home unsupervised

N.B It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or have a disability. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the players involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependant on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give

choices where possible. This is particularly true if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

If any of the following incidents should occur, you should report them immediately to another colleague and make a written note of the event. This action should be taken as soon as possible for the protection of all individuals concerned. Parents should also be informed of the incident:

- If you accidentally hurt a player
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner
- If a player appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- If a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done

### 4.4 RELATIONSHIPS OF TRUST

"The inequality at the heart of a relationship of trust should be ended before any sexual relationship begins." Caring for young people and the Vulnerable - Guidance for preventing abuse of trust (Home Office 1999)

This statement recognises that genuine relationships do occur between the different levels of volunteers and participants in a group but that no intimate relationship should begin whilst the member of staff or volunteer is in a 'position of trust' over them. The power and influence that an older member of staff has over someone attending a group or activity cannot be under-estimated. If there is an additional competitive aspect to the activity and the older person is responsible for the child's success or failure to some extent, then the dependency of the younger member upon the older will be increased. It is therefore vital for volunteers to recognise these issues and to ensure that they do not abuse their positions of trust. Children aged 16 can legally consent to sexual activity; however, in some provisions of legislation they are classified as children, and within this Safeguarding Policy it is misconduct for any volunteer or employee to enter into a sexual relationship with any child under the age of 18 involved in any way in Rugby League.

If you engage in an intimate or inappropriate relationship with a child with whom you are in a relationship of trust, regardless of whether they are legally able to consent or not, it is breach of the Safeguarding Policy and the Rugby League Code of Conduct and as such will result in disciplinary action.

In certain circumstances the 'abuse of trust' is a criminal offence (Sexual Offences Amendment Act 2000, Sexual Offences Act 2003).

### 4.5 GROOMING

The majority of adults working with children in Rugby League are committed to providing an enjoyable and safe environment in which to participate. However, a small proportion of adults actively seek opportunities to abuse children for their own sexual needs.

Sexual abuse of children is the result of a pre-meditated actions that are carefully planned. Preparing a child or organisation (i.e a Club) is described as 'grooming' and is illegal under the provisions of The Sexual Offences Act 2003. It is important to understand how an abuser can 'groom' a club or parents or a child by appearing trustworthy and helpful, therefore giving the impression that they can take responsibility for a young person/some young people.

Abusers come from all sections of society, within and outside of the family and within and outside Rugby League. They may be perceived as 'respectable' people – the very last person anyone could suspect of abusing a child; this is usually the image they work hard to portray. Research into abuse demonstrates clearly that children are most likely to be abused by someone they know and who is likely to be in a position of trust with the child. Whilst the vast majority of sexual abusers are male, it is important not to overlook the fact that female sexual abusers do exist.



Sexual abusers use various techniques to 'groom' children, organizations and parents. These include:

- Seeking opportunities to be in contact with children, e.g. volunteering.
- Making friends with children, coaches, volunteers or parents
- Appearing trustworthy and helpful
- Giving presents to children or offering additional individual support/coaching
- Complimenting the child to make them feel comfortable and confident.
- Threatening (you wont get picked for the team) or bribing (you will get picked for the team) the child
- Telling the child that it's normal

Abusers target children who they see as particularly vulnerable, this may be due to the child having low self-esteem or it appearing that they have little parental support. Therefore, children's parents should always be encouraged to be part of the club as this can act as an extra safeguard.

There are particular risks for talented children and these children are more at risk of abuse on 'away trips'. These risks are particularly acute at the point at which an athlete is at 'pre-peak' performance. These risks relate to:

- Separation from close family and friends– due to amount of 'away' travel and possibly living away from home
- Dependence on the coach for team selection, advice, emotional support, money.
- Lack of safeguards away from home such as lack of checks on accommodation practices
- Too much emphasis on winning and high performance and not enough on personal development and enjoyment. This environment can sometimes be condoned by parents.

Any concerns relating to an adult's behaviour or intentions towards children should be reported appropriately, see Section 5 which deals with reporting relating to Reporting Concerns.

## RESPONDING TO, RECORDING & REPORTING POOR PRACTICE, ABUSE AND BULLYING OR OTHER CONCERNS WITHIN OR OUTSIDE RUGBY LEAGUE

### 5.1 BACKGROUND

There is a legal and moral responsibility to report any concerns about a child within Rugby League and any concerns which may be raised about a child outside the sport. Child abuse of all types, particularly sexual abuse, can generate strong and confusing emotions in those facing such a situation for instance disbelief, disgust, anger etc. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take. Abuse and poor practice can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment.

It is understood that people may often have concerns about reporting the behaviour of adults who are aggressive and potentially violent. Where possible the RFL will protect the identity of the person who has reported an incident when they feel threatened by the individual concerned. It should be remembered that if these individuals are intimidating to other adults they are likely to be even more intimidating to any children within their care and that there is a duty of care to report such behaviour.

Rugby League clubs are often close communities which generate strong loyalties between the volunteers working together. The RFL appreciates that it can be difficult to report close colleagues but would remind all those involved in the game of their over riding moral duty to ensure the welfare of the children at the

club above any sense of loyalty to colleagues or the club. All suspicions of abuse or cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

A coach, official or volunteer may have regular contact with children and be an important link in the identifying cases where a child needs protection. In addition coaches can often become the only adult that a child feels they can trust. This can often lead to a coach receiving a disclosure about abuse outside the club environment. In these circumstances there is a duty to pass on the information and coaches and other volunteers need to be aware of the action to take in these circumstances.

### 5.2 WHISTLE BLOWING

The RFL is determined to ensure that the culture of the sport is one in which it is safe, acceptable and gives confidence to those involved in rugby league to raise concerns about unacceptable practice and misconduct. In order to achieve this, the RFL has a Whistle Blowing Policy which is attached at Appendix 7. The RFL rules make it an offence to harass or victimise a whistle blower.

### 5.3 WHAT ACTION TO TAKE TO REPORT CONCERNS, REPORT A DISCLOSURE OR AN ALLEGATION

The flow charts set out in Appendix 12 set out in detail the principles to be followed if:

- An allegation, suspicion or disclosure of poor practice or abuse is made within the game; or
- An allegation, suspicion or disclosure of abuse is made from outside the game.

The points below set out general principles to be followed with all concerns, allegations and disclosures.

### 5.4 ADVICE ON ACTION TO BE TAKEN IF A CHILD DISCLOSES TO YOU

If a child informs you directly that he/she, or another child, is concerned about someone's behaviour towards them (this is termed a 'disclosure') then:

The person receiving the information should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten or deter the child
- Believe what the child is telling you
- Tell the child he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell
- Ensure the immediate safety of the child
- If the child needs immediate medical treatment, take them to hospital or telephone for an ambulance, inform doctors of the concerns and make sure that they know that this is a Safeguarding issue
- Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child who has speech disability and/or differences in language
- Keep any questions to the minimum required to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said
- Do not ask leading questions or make suggestions about what may have happened
- Reassure the child but do not make promises of confidentiality which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments
- In the event of suspicion of sexual abuse do not let the child shower or wash until given permission to do so by the police as washing can destroy valuable evidence
- Where appropriate seek advice immediately from Children's Social Care or Police who will advise on the action to be taken, including advice on contacting parents, Expert advice can also be provided by the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or Childline on 0800 1111 (both 24 hours).

- Alternatively contact the RFL Safeguarding Team
- Involve somebody else – if not Children’s Social Care or Police then the Club Welfare Officer, Regional Welfare Officer or the RFL Safeguarding Officer so that you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself.
- Write down the details of the concern, incident and/or what the child has disclosed as soon as possible, including details of who this information has been shared with and when.

The person receiving the information should NOT:

- Panic
- Allow their shock or distaste to show
- Show any disbelief or fail to take the allegations seriously
- Ask questions other than to clarify that they have enough information to act
- Speculate or make assumptions
- Make negative comments about alleged abuser
- Approach the alleged abuser
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets
- Take sole responsibility
- Shirk the responsibility to report the concern

### 5.5 CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. The legal principle that the “welfare of the child is paramount” means that considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations within the organisation should not be allowed to override the right of children to be protected from harm.

However every effort must be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained when an allegation has been made and is being investigated.

Information should be handled and disseminated on a ‘need to know’ basis only. This may include the following people:

- The Club Welfare Officer;
- The Regional Welfare Officer;
- The RFL Safeguarding Officer, the RFL Compliance Manager;
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused (only following advice from the Children’s Social Care/Police or where the abuse does not involve the family );
- The person making the allegation;
- Children’s Social Care/LSCB/Police;
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a young person) only following advice from the Children’s Social Care/Police.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with the data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

### 5.6 RECORDING THE INCIDENT OR ALLEGATION

Information passed to Children’s Social Care or the Police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record at the time of the disclosure/concern. Ideally this information should be compiled utilising the Incident Referral Form at Template 10

Information required at the referral stage:

Child - Age/ gender / name / disabilities / address / contact details/ parental responsibility / culture / agencies already working with the family / relationship between child and accused.

Accused - Name / address / contact details/ position – employee / volunteer / paid / level of coach; Any other allegations; Marital status; Age; Previous incidents.

Primary evidence

Core information about the alleged incident.

- Facts from the person making the allegation including dates/times/venue/witness details;
- Records with dates;
- Has anyone else been informed or is anyone else already involved in the investigation.

Reporting the matter to the Police or Children’s Social Care should not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be informed of any concerns relating to suspected abuse of a position of trust either directly or via the statutory agencies (LSCB /Children’s Social Care/ Police) as soon as possible. Wherever possible, referrals telephoned to Children’s Social Care, the Police or the LSCB should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. A record should also be made of the name and job title of the Children’s Social Care or the LSCB member of staff or Police Officer whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow up is needed. Any information forwarded to the Children’s Social Care, the LSCB or Police should also be provided to the RFL Safeguarding Officer so that they can consider any wider issues within the game.

### 5.7 THE ROLE OF THE STATUTORY AGENCIES

#### 5.7.1

Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) have statutory duty under The ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People’ (DoH, 1999) to ensure the welfare of children and work with all agencies to comply with its procedures.

Children can only be safeguarded properly if the key agencies work effectively together. Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) are designed to help ensure that this happens. They put the former Area Child Protection Committees (ACPCs) on a statutory footing.

The core membership of LSCBs is set out in the Children Act 2004, and includes local authorities, health bodies, the police and others. The objective of LSCBs is to coordinate and to ensure the effectiveness of their member agencies in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children requires effective co-ordination in every local area. For this reason, the Children Act 2004 requires each Local Authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

The LSCB is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

In accordance with statutory guidance, every Local Authority will have a Designated Officer (LADO) who is responsible for providing advice, liaison and monitoring the progress of cases where allegations have been

made against people who work with children (Working Together to Safeguard Children. A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children [HM Government, 2006], appendix 5). The LADO should be informed either directly, or via Children's Social Care/the Police if they are involved, of all allegations that come to the RFL's attention and appear to meet the following criteria:

- an individual is alleged to have behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- an individual is alleged to have possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or,
- an individual is alleged to have behaved in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

### 5.7.2

Children's Social Care (previously Social Services) have a statutory duty to ensure the welfare of children and to work with the LSCB to comply with its procedures. When a Safeguarding referral is made, the Children's Social Care staff has a legal responsibility to make enquires where a child who lives or is found in their area is considered to be at risk of, or actually suffering from, significant harm. This may involve talking to the child and family, and gathering information from other people who know the child. Enquires may be carried out jointly with the Police where a crime has been alleged. If action needs to be taken urgently and out of office hours, then the Police will deal with the enquiry sensitively and effectively. Children's Social Care will link in closely with their respective LSCB and cross-reference the guidance produced by the LSCB.

### 5.7.3

Police Child & Public Protection Units investigate all cases of abuse against children that occurs within family relationships, by professionals or carers and cases of organised abuse. The Units also investigate the activity of people who use the internet and other means to distribute or collect abusive and indecent images of children.

Units are also responsible for dealing with individuals who are registered sex offenders, under the terms of the Sex Offenders Act 1997 and other offenders who are regarded as a potential danger to the community.

Units work jointly with a range of other agencies, but primarily Children's Social Care in relation to Child Abuse and the National Probation Service, in relation to Sex and Other Dangerous Offenders.

The staff in the Units are specially selected for their skills in dealing with complex and sensitive crime and receive comprehensive initial training and a period of tutorship with an experienced Unit member. The training includes methods of obtaining evidence from vulnerable victims and witnesses, the preservation and security of forensic samples and other specialist training on how to investigate child abuse and sex offences.

Where clubs are made aware by any of the statutory agencies that their club or a volunteer or child at their club is subject to a Safeguarding investigation by either Children's Social Care, the LSCB or the Police the club should always inform the RFL immediately. The RFL may have to take immediate action to protect the welfare of children but will always work in tandem with the statutory bodies.

## 5.8 THE RFL CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

In the case of alleged abuse or poor practice the RFL Safeguarding Case Management Group (SCMG) will:

- Decide there is no risk and reject the complaint or concern and inform the complainant of their decision;
- Decide that the Club or League concerned should deal with the complaint as an internal matter in which case the Club or League shall keep the SCMG informed of its decision and any action taken;
- Decide to have an initial investigation of the complaint investigated and refer it to a Compliance Investigator for an initial report;

- Decide to inform the person or club against who the complaint has been made and order a full investigation in which case the SCMG may decide to impose a Temporary Suspension Order (TSO) while the investigation is being carried out

- Refer the concern to the statutory agencies

The RFL has a team of Compliance Investigators, some of whom have specific Safeguarding experience, who will be used to carry out an investigation and report to the SCMG. Following the investigation the SCMG will consider the Compliance Investigator's report and decide on the course of action to take which includes one or more of the following options:

- Decide that there is no case to answer
- Decide that the person against whom the complaint was made should attend further training within a specified time period
- Decide that a warning as to future conduct is sufficient (regardless of whether there is a finding of guilt)
- Decide that an undertaking as to future conduct is sufficient
- Decide that the case be referred to a hearing of the RFL Operational Rules Tribunal under Section D1 of the Operational Rules in which case a TSO may be imposed until the hearing
- Refer the concern to the statutory agencies.

Where the Police and/or Children's Social Care and/or LSCB are involved in a case the RFL SCMG will liaise with the statutory bodies and may impose a TSO or defer any action until the statutory bodies have completed their work. Irrespective of the findings of Children's Social Care, the LSCB or Police enquiries, the RFL Safeguarding Case Management Group will assess all individual cases to decide whether action should be taken by the RFL. This will follow the procedures set out in Appendix 3

The welfare of the child will always remain paramount.

### Appeals

The appeals procedure set out under the rules is available to anyone under investigation in line with the principles of natural justice.

The full Safeguarding Regulations are set out in Appendix 3.

## 5.9 SUPPORT TO DEAL WITH THE AFTERMATH

Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to children, parents and members of staff and volunteers. Use of Help Lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association of Counselling Directory may be a useful resource. The RFL can advise on counselling options.

## 5.10 SUPPORT FOR THE ALLEGED PERPETRATOR

Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to the alleged perpetrator of the abuse. The RFL will provide alleged perpetrators with a support package.

## 5.11 INDICATORS OF ABUSE

Indications that a child may be being abused include the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent



- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her
- Someone else (a child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper)
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- Has difficulty in making friends
- Is prevented from socialising with other children
- Displays variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite
- Loses weight for no apparent reason
- Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place. A good working relationship with parents will help to identify any concerns that a child may be experiencing, e.g. family bereavement.

It is not the responsibility of those working in Rugby League to decide that child abuse is occurring but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns.

## RESPECT

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Rugby League prides itself on being a family game which is inclusive, uncompromising and passionate, and the principles of RESPECT, set out the obligations on all participants to maintain the game's high standards.

The game will take positive action to ensure that high standards of behaviour are maintained at all times in Rugby League. RESPECT sets out the standards of behaviour which the game expects from the entire Rugby League family. Rugby League is passionate about, and prides itself, on its reputation as "The Family Game" and as such, will take responsibility to ensure that this reputation is maintained and improved. The Game is an inclusive sport, is committed to the principles of equal opportunities and will not tolerate any form of discrimination.

In order to uphold these values participants in the game of Rugby League - players, parents, spectators, coaches, match officials, other volunteers and administrators of all ages – should:

- Discourage all instances of unsporting behaviour, foul or illegal play, or acts of violence, both on and off the field.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person regardless of their age, ethnic origin, gender, special needs, including learning and physical disabilities, class or social background, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, colour or political persuasion.
- Accept the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures to provide a duty of care for children (under the age of 18), safeguard their wellbeing and protect them from abuse and poor practice.
- Condemn the use of recreational and performance- enhancing drugs and doping practices; their use endangers the health of players and is contrary to the concept of fair play.

Important - Every person who attends a Rugby League match does so with the permission and licence of the home club &/or league.

Breaches of this Code of Conduct may result in penalties up to and including a fine, loss of team match points and suspension.

### PLAYER

- Be a good sport. Respect all good play whether from your team or the opposition and shake hands with and thank the opposition players and officials after the game - win, lose or draw.
- Participate for your own enjoyment and benefit. Make every effort to develop your own abilities.
- Always respect the match official's decision.
- Make every effort to be consistent with Fair Play and the Laws of the Game. Never get involved foul play.
- Honour both the spirit and letter of the competition rules and live up to the highest ideals of ethics and sportsmanship; avoid gamesmanship and respect the traditions of the game.
- Never engage in disrespectful conduct of any sort including swearing, obscene gestures, offensive remarks, taunting or other actions that are demeaning to other players, officials or supporters. Treat others as you would like to be treated.
- Care for and respect the facilities and equipment made available to you during training and competition.
- Safeguard your health; don't use any illegal or unhealthy substances.
- Recognise that many officials, coaches and match officials are volunteers who give up their time to provide their services. Treat them with the utmost respect. Remember, without them you do not have a game.
- Do not bet or otherwise financially speculate, directly or indirectly, on the outcome or any other aspect of a rugby league match or competition in which you are involved.

**COACH**

- Actively discourage foul play and/or unsporting behaviour by players.
- Seek to maximise the participation and enjoyment for all players regardless of ability;
- avoid the tendency to over-use a talented player; treat all players as equals, regardless of their talent.
- Show concern and caution towards all sick and injured players. Follow the advice of a doctor and/or physiotherapist to the letter when determining when an injured player is ready to recommence training or playing.
- Teach players that an honest effort and competing to the best of their ability is as important as victory.
- Encourage players to respect and accept the judgement of the Match Officials.
- Never engage in public criticism of officials.
- Maintain appropriate, professional relationships with players at all times.
- Make a personal commitment to maintain an accurate knowledge of the rules of the game and keep abreast of current coaching methods; maintain or improve your current accreditation level.
- Always consider the health, safety and welfare of the players.
- Teach young players to realise that there is a big gap between their level of play and the professional game; do not coach them as if they are professionals.
- Ensure that your coaching reflects the level of the competition being played; do not be a “win-at-all-costs” coach.
- As coach, conduct yourself at all times and in all situations, in a manner, that demonstrates leadership, respect for the game of Rugby League and respect for all those that are involved in the game - the players, officials, the fans, the parents, the referees and the media.
- Abide by the Coach Code of Conduct.

**MATCH OFFICIAL**

- Apply the laws of the game with complete impartiality.
- Prepare fully for a match, both physically and mentally.
- Conduct yourself both on and off the field with the utmost integrity.
- Set a good example by the way you dress, speak and act towards players, coaches, officials, parents and spectators.
- Place the safety and welfare of the players above all else.
- Be alert to minimise dangerous physical play, fair or foul, especially in junior matches.
- Respond swiftly to all instances of unsporting, foul or unfair play.
- Show concern and caution for sick and injured players.
- Be accountable for your actions.
- Accurately report any misconduct including breach of RESPECT to the appropriate authorities.
- Avoid any situation, which may lead to a conflict of interest both on and off the field.
- Always complete and return, accurately and promptly, all administrative paperwork.

**PARENT/SPECTATOR**

- Do not force an unwilling child to participate in sport.
- Remember that children participate in Rugby League for their own enjoyment, not yours!
- Understand that sport is part of a total life experience, and the benefits of involvement go far beyond the final score of a game.
- Condemn all violent or illegal acts, whether they are by players, coaches, officials, parents or spectators.
- Respect the match official's decisions - don't complain or argue about decisions during or after a game.
- Behave! Unsporting language, harassment or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Encourage players to play by the rules and to respect opposition players and officials.
- Never ridicule or scorn a player for making a mistake - respect their efforts.
- Participate in positive cheering that encourages all the players in the team; do not engage in any jeering that taunts or intimidates opponents, their fans or officials.
- At all times, follow the directions of the Ground Manager and/or other match day staff.
- Never arrive at a game under the influence of alcohol, never bring alcohol to a game, and only drink alcohol, if it is available at the ground, in the designated licensed area.

**VOLUNTEER AND ADMINSTRATOR**

- Always operate to the principle of “Friendship first - competition second”.
- Ensure that all operations are under the supervision of appropriately qualified staff who have been through the required recruitment and selection checks.
- Ensure that all staff understand and adhere to the Code of Conduct.
- Ensure that all equipment and facilities meet safety standards.
- Encourage all participants to remember that sport is enjoyed for its own sake- play down the importance of awards.

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**

After consultation with children and young people this is what they would like to see from others involved in the game:

- Keep training and games fun - winning is not the primary objective for young people playing the game; having fun is.
- Everyone makes mistakes. There should be no undue criticism of any player who makes a mistake - encouragement reaps more benefits.
- Coaches should not lose their temper.
- All adults should be role models in everything they do - do not swear, abuse officials, show unsporting behaviour, encourage foul play, enter the field of play or drink or smoke when around children and young people.
- Report any incidents of bad behaviour.

After consultation, children and young people agree to:

- Give 100% effort at all times.
- Encourage team mates who make mistakes.

- Not argue with the referee.
- Listen to the coach.
- Play as a team.
- Dress smartly
- Welcome all new players, from all backgrounds, whether or not they have played before.
- Treat the other team with RESPECT.
- Attend all training sessions when possible.
- No bullying.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

The code of conduct is a Coaching Section Policy to which all coaches MUST ADHERE.

### HUMANITY

The RFL affirms its commitment to the equal treatment of all and will not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of age, race, ethnicity, gender, special needs, including learning and physical disabilities, class or social background, religious beliefs or faith, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, colour or political persuasion.

### RELATIONSHIPS

The good Rugby League Coach is concerned with:

- The safety, well being and protection of all individuals in their charge, ensuring that all training and playing demands are not detrimental to the social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs of the individual.
- Encouraging independence through guiding performers to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance within training and competition.
- Ensuring their behaviour is not being misconstrued or open to allegations of favouritism, misconduct or impropriety, particularly where physical contact between coach and performer is necessary within coaching practice.
- Ensuring performers and relevant people are aware of their qualifications and experience
- Respecting the rights of performers to choose to consent or decline to participate within coaching or playing situations.
- Refraining from public criticism of other coaches, - the definition of public in this instance means criticism expressed outside of the appropriate reporting process in place should concerns about practice arise.

### INTEGRITY

The good Rugby League Coach:

- Abides by the rules of Rugby League
- Follows fair play and ethical guidelines
- Ensures all practices are suitable and relevant dependant on age, maturity, experience and ability of performers
- Promotes the prevention and education of the misuse of performance enhancing and illegal substances
- Coaches must accurately present and evidence, upon request, details of their training qualifications and services.
- Is committed to continually improving their practice through training and learning opportunities
- Coaches claiming an affiliation, sponsorship or accreditation with any organization should do so in a truthful and accurate manner.
- All coaches must declare, to the appropriate body, any criminal convictions and submit to safeguarding checks as required.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

The coach and performer must reach agreement about what is to be regarded as confidential information.



Confidentiality does not necessarily include disclosure of information to persons who can be judged to have a right to know. For example:

- Evaluation for selection purposes
- Recommendations for employment
- In matters of disciplinary within the sport
- In matters of disciplinary action by a sport organisation against one of its members
- Legal and medical requirements
- Recommendations to parents/family where the health and safety of performers might be at risk
- In pursuit of action to protect children and young persons from abuse

### PERSONAL STANDARDS

Rugby League Coaches within the coaching/playing environment must not attempt to exert undue influences and pressures in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.

Coaches must display high personal standards that project a favourable image of Rugby League including:

- Good personal appearance that projects an image of health, cleanliness and functional efficiency
- Coaches should never smoke when in the coaching environment

Coaches should refrain from drinking prior to or, whilst performing, any role in Rugby League or whilst in the presence of young participants.

### COMPETENCE

- All coaches must be appropriately qualified as per the requirements of the Coaching Section.
- Coaches should regularly seek ways of increasing their personal and professional development.
- Coaches must be receptive to employing systems of evaluation that include self evaluation and also external evaluation in an effort to assess the effectiveness of their work.

Coaches must be able to recognise and accept when to refer or recommend performers to other coaches or structures. It is the coach's responsibility as far as possible to:

- Verify the competence of the performer
- Verify the competence and integrity of any other persons or structure to whom they refer the performer

### SAFETY

Within the limits of their control coaches have a responsibility to:

- Establish a safe working environment
- Ensure as far as possible the safety of the players with whom they work
- Safeguard and protect children from harm and abuse
- Fully prepare their players for the activities and make them aware of their personal responsibility in terms of safety
- Ensure all activities undertaken are appropriate for stage of development, experience and ability of the performers and in keeping with the approved practices as determined by the National Governing Body/ Rugby League Coaching Section

- Communicate and co-ordinate with registered medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their performers' medical and psychological problems.

### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Any individual or organisation wishing to make a complaint against a Rugby League Coach within the context of this code should follow the procedure below:

Report the matter to the employer of the sports coach and to the relevant Rugby League Governing Body responsible for that area of the game. NB employer in this instance refers to the organisation who commissioned the coach to do the coaching whether this is paid or unpaid employment

Any complaints where there are potential Safeguarding Issues should be responded to in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Rugby League Safeguarding & Protecting Children Policy

### COACHING

- Children play for fun and enjoyment
- Be reasonable in your demands on children's time, energy and enthusiasm – remember they to have other interests.
- Never ridicule or shout at a child for making mistakes at training or during games
- Avoid over-playing talented players. The average players deserve equal time and attention; time should be afforded to all
- Always group players according to age, height, skill, and physical maturity whenever possible
- Follow the advice of medical personnel when there are any concerns about a player being fit to participate
- Teach your players the rules of the game
- Teach children to respect the judgement of officials
- The successful Coach invests more in the well-being and interests of players than in their own win-loss record.

### OFFICIATING

- Sportsmanship and fair play are not a set of rules - they are a code of living
- Condemn gamesmanship and emphasise respect for fair play
- Be consistent, objective and courteous when dealing with all decisions during a game
- Use sound judgment to ensure that the spirit of the game is not lost
- Compliment both teams on good play when such praise is deserved

### ADMINISTRATING

- Strive for competent levels of planning and communication
- Make sure that venues and facilities meet the needs of the children
- Ensure that all activities are supervised and appropriate for the players
- Seek support from others with appropriate skills where necessary

## SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE GROUPS REGULATIONS

### PURPOSE OF THESE RULES

#### D4:1

The purpose of these rules is to ensure the safeguarding of vulnerable groups within the game, the welfare of these groups is paramount, and these rules shall be interpreted in a manner that is consistent with that purpose. Where a matter arise that is not otherwise provided for in these Rules, the RFL shall use its discretion to resolve the matter in such manner as it thinks fit bearing in mind the purpose of these Rules and provided that such resolution does not materially undermine the reliability of proceedings under these Rules or otherwise cause material injustice to anybody bound by these Rules.

### JURISDICTION

#### D4:2

The RFL, including all constituent members, has adopted the RFL Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Policy as amended from time to time, the current version is set out in Section E3 below. All persons subject to the Operational Rules or otherwise under the jurisdiction of the RFL or a member of the RFL are deemed to have assented to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Policy and the Rugby League Code of Ethics and Conduct and as such are deemed to have undertaken to recognise and adhere to the principles and responsibilities embodied in them (as amended or replaced from time to time).

### RFL OBLIGATIONS

#### D4:3

The RFL must:

- a) Appoint a designated person to manage Safeguarding;
- b) Publish a Safeguarding Policy and a Safeguarding Plan;
- c) Appoint a Safeguarding Case Management Group;
- d) Appoint a Safeguarding Steering Group;
- e) Manage the CRB process;
- f) Respond to any complaints and concerns which relate to Safeguarding;

### MEMBER OR CLUB OBLIGATIONS

#### D4:4

Each Member or club associated to a member which runs a junior section or programme must:

- a) Comply with the RFL Safeguarding Policy;
- b) Appoint a Club Welfare Officer;
- c) Adopt a Club Safeguarding Policy;
- d) Ensure that the Club responds to any complaints or concerns which relate to Safeguarding;
- e) Implement recommended recruitment policies and ensure that all relevant members or volunteers have been CRB checked;
- f) Carry out disciplinary procedures when requested to do so by the RFL.

### MISCONDUCT

#### D4:5

In this Section D4 of these Operational Rules the expression “Misconduct” shall mean:

- (a) Any act, statement, conduct, omission or other matter which in the reasonable opinion of the Safeguarding Case Management Group harms a child or vulnerable adult, or poses or may pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult;
- (b) Any one or more of the offences contained in the schedules of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000;
- (c) Any other criminal offence which reasonably causes the RFL to believe that the person(s) accused of the offence poses or may pose a risk of harm to a child or children or a vulnerable adult;
- (d) A disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau;
- (e) A breach of the RFL Safeguarding Policy.

### PROCEDURES

#### D4:6

The procedures in this Section D4 will apply if the RFL receives any of the following:

- (a) A Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure;
- (b) A complaint or concern about the behaviour of one or more persons or a club which may constitute abuse or poor practice; or
- (c) A report of a criminal action or criminal investigation either before or after conviction in the courts.

For the purpose of these Regulations, the RFL shall follow the procedures set out in this Section D4 and Section D1 above.

Any references in this Section D4 to ‘work with’ include but are not limited to where such work is provided in return for financial remuneration and where such work is provided on a volunteer basis.

### CRB DISCLOSURE

#### D4:7

CRB Disclosures received by the RFL will be considered by the Operations Department and where there is a positive disclosure the Operations Department will carry out a risk assessment (RA) to decide whether the person is suitable to work with vulnerable groups.

### LOW RISK

If, following assessment, the risk is considered to be low the RFL will inform the person and the club that the RFL does not consider there is any reason why the person should not work unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults within the sport.

### MEDIUM RISK

If the risk is considered to be medium the disclosure will be referred to the Safeguarding Case Management Group (SCMG). The Operations Department will continue to make further enquiries which may include interviewing the person and will then carry out a second RA. If following further investigation the RA is considered to be low then following approval from the SCMG the RFL will inform the person and the club that the RFL does not consider there is any reason why the person should not work unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults within the sport. If following the further investigation the RA is still considered to be medium then the SCMG will consider the case and decide whether the person be:

- (i) allowed to work with vulnerable groups subject to such checks and balances as the SCMG thinks fit which may involve the person giving permission for the CRB check to be discussed with the club concerned; or
- (ii) subjected to a Temporary Suspension Order (TSO) while further enquiries are carried out.

#### **HIGH RISK**

If the initial RA is considered to be high risk the disclosure will be referred to the SCMG who will consider the RA and may implement a Temporary Suspension Order (TSO) while further enquiries are carried out.

Any enquiries carried out as a result of the risk being assessed as medium or high may be carried out by the Operations Department or may be referred to the Compliance Investigators. The RFL may require permission to contact statutory bodies in order to complete its investigations.

A person subject to a TSO may appeal such TSO in accordance with D4.9 below.

Following the investigation a further RA will be carried out. If the RA is now considered Low or Medium (in a situation where an order that the person be allowed to work with vulnerable groups subject to appropriate checks and balances is appropriate) the process above will be followed. If as the RA is still considered Medium (in a situation where a TSO is appropriate) or High the subject of the TSO will be informed that the TSO will remain in place in which case the subject will have a further 28 days in which to lodge a right of appeal to the RFL. Any such appeal will be heard by the Operational Rules Tribunal acting in accordance with the appeal procedures set out in Section D1 above.

#### **COMPLAINT OR CONCERN**

##### **D4:7**

If the RFL is made aware of a complaint or concern the following procedure will be followed:

The complaint will be referred to the SCMG who will decide what action to take as follows:

- a) Decide there is no risk and reject the complaint or concern and inform the complainant of their decision;
- b) Decide that the Club or League concerned should deal with the complaint as an internal matter in which case the Club or League shall keep the SCMG informed of its decision and any action taken;
- c) Decide to have an initial investigation of the complaint and refer it to a Compliance Investigator for an initial report;
- d) Decide to inform the person or club against who the complaint has been made and order a full investigation in which case the SCMG may decide to impose a TSO while the investigation is being carried out;
- e) Following the investigation the SGMG will consider the Compliance Investigator's report and decide on the course of action to take which includes the following options:
  - (i) decide that there is no case to answer;
  - (ii) decide that the person against whom the complaint was made should attend further training within a specified time period;
  - (iii) decide that an undertaking as to future conduct is sufficient;
  - (iv) decide that the case be referred to a hearing of the RFL Operational Rules Tribunal under Section D1 in which case a TSO may be imposed until the hearing.

#### **CRIMINAL ACTION OR CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION**

##### **D4:8**

If the RFL is made aware that a person is subject to criminal action or a criminal investigation the following procedure will be followed:

The matter will be referred to the SCMG who will decide what action to take as follows:

- a) Decide to monitor the situation;
- b) Decide to impose a TSO while the police investigation/criminal proceedings are ongoing;
- c) Decide to inform the person or club against whom the complaint has been made and order a full investigation in which case the SCMG may decide to impose a TSO while the investigation is being carried out;
- d) Decide to start an investigation by writing to the person who is subject to criminal action or a criminal investigation in which case no investigation will start until such time as the police investigation/criminal proceedings have been completed although the SCMG may decide to impose a TSO;
- e) Following the investigation the SCMG will consider the Compliance Investigator's report and decide on the course of action to take which includes the following options:
  - (i) decide that there is no case to answer;
  - (ii) decide that the person against whom the complaint was made should attend further training within a specified time period;
  - (iii) decide that an undertaking as to future conduct is sufficient;
  - (iv) decide that the case be referred to a hearing of the RFL Operational Rules Tribunal under Section D1 in which case a TSO may be imposed until the hearing.

#### **SUSPENSION ORDERS**

##### **D4:9**

The RFL may impose suspension orders as follows:

##### **Temporary Suspension Order**

Temporary Suspension Orders will be made by the SCMG who shall have the power to order that the individual be suspended from playing in (or attending) Matches and all or any other Rugby League activity or any venue where Rugby League activity takes place for such period and on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit on a case by case basis. The subject of a TSO will be informed in writing and has the right to appeal to the RFL Operational Rules Tribunal, in accordance with the appeal procedures set out in Section D1 above, within 28 days of the TSO being imposed. Unless reversed or amended on appeal a TSO remains in effect until it is lifted by the SCMG or until a Permanent Suspension Order (PSO) is imposed.

A TSO may be imposed when the SCMG receives:

- (a) Notification that an individual has been charged with an Offence; or
- (b) Notification that an individual is the subject of an investigation by the Police, Social Services or any other authority relating to an Offence; or
- (c) Any other information which causes the RFL reasonably to believe that a person poses or may pose a risk of harm to a child or children or vulnerable adult(s).

In reaching its determination as to whether a TSO should be made, the RFL shall give consideration, inter alia, to the following factors:

- (a) Whether a child or vulnerable adult is or may be or children or vulnerable adults are or may be at risk of harm;
- (b) Whether the matters or offence alleged are of a serious nature;
- (c) Whether an order is necessary or desirable to allow the conduct of any investigation by the RFL or any other authority or body to proceed unimpeded.

No TSO shall be made so as to continue to apply beyond the date upon which any charge under the

Operational Rules of the RFL or any Offence is the subject of a final and binding decision or is brought to an end.

Where a TSO is imposed on an individual, the RFL shall bring and conclude any proceedings under the Operational Rules of the RFL against the person accused as soon as reasonably practicable.

#### PERMANENT SUSPENSION ORDER

Should the SCMG believe that a Permanent Suspension Order is necessary then it must apply to the Operational Rules Tribunal outlining the reasons for its request. The proposed subject of the PSO will be forwarded a copy of the reasons and shall, subject to the paragraph below, have the right to appear before the Operational Rules Tribunal under the procedures set out in D1 above.

The Operational Rules Tribunal shall be entitled to impose a PSO despite the proposed subject not being able to attend the hearing if in all the circumstances they consider it appropriate (for instance where the proposed subject is not able to attend due to being in prison).

Where a TSO is imposed on an individual, the RFL shall bring and conclude any proceedings under the Operational Rules of the RFL against the person accused as soon as reasonably practicable.

The Operational Rules Tribunal shall be entitled to impose a TSO despite the proposed subject not being able to attend the hearing if in all the circumstances they consider it appropriate (for instance where the proposed subject is not able to attend due to being in prison).

Where a TSO is imposed on an individual, the RFL shall bring and conclude any proceedings under the Operational Rules of the RFL against the person accused as soon as reasonably practicable.

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Where a TSO is imposed on an individual, the RFL shall bring and conclude any proceedings under the Operational Rules of the RFL against the person accused as soon as reasonably practicable.

The Operational Rules Tribunal shall be entitled to impose a TSO despite the proposed subject not being able to attend the hearing if in all the circumstances they consider it appropriate (for instance where the proposed subject is not able to attend due to being in prison).

## ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

CLUB WELFARE OFFICER (CWO)	
Overall Purpose	To be responsible for the implementation and adherence to the RFL Safeguarding & Protecting Children Policy and its resulting guidelines by the club and its members
Key Duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To act as a source of advice and support on Safeguarding issues and matters</li> <li>- To support the training of coaches, officials and those in contact with children through the game of Rugby League</li> <li>- To act as first point of contact for anyone in the club who has a concern about a child and about poor practice/possible abuse</li> <li>- To promote a child friendly club environment</li> <li>- To ensure the effective implementation of the RFL Safeguarding Policy</li> </ul> <p>In case of concerns and/or allegations of child abuse, it should be stressed that the CWO is NOT required to make any decision regarding allegations of abuse but should follow the guidelines as laid out in the RFL Safeguarding Policy (Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations)</p>
Suggested activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assist the RFL to fulfil its responsibilities to safeguard children and young people at club level &amp; to implement its Safeguarding Plan at club level</li> <li>- To be the first point of contact for staff, volunteers, parents, children and young people where concerns about children's welfare, poor practice or child abuse are identified.</li> <li>- To liaise with the RFL Safeguarding Officer</li> <li>- To ensure the implementation of the RFL reporting and recording procedures</li> <li>- Maintain contact details of local Social Services, Police and know how to obtain Local Safeguarding Children Boards</li> <li>- Actively promote the RFL best practice guidance/code of conduct and ethics within the club</li> <li>- Be part of the club management committee</li> <li>- Promote and ensure adherence to the RFL Safeguarding training plan</li> <li>- Promote and ensure that confidentiality is maintained</li> <li>- Promote anti-discriminatory practice</li> </ul>
Key results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The club adheres to the RFL Safeguarding Policy</li> <li>- There is a safe and open environment for the children and young people</li> <li>- Staff are trained and aware of the Safeguarding Policy and its implications on their actions</li> <li>- Good relations are fostered and developed between the CWO and local agencies i.e. the local police and Children's Social Care/Social Services</li> <li>- The CWO plays an active part of the club management committee</li> </ul>



Commitment	Approximately 4 hours per week, flexible, in an on-going capacity
Benefits to self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social interaction</li> <li>- An insight into the management and operation of a club</li> <li>- Involvement with the RFL</li> <li>- Personal and professional development opportunities eg NSPCC certificated training</li> <li>- Pride in the knowledge that the work of the CWO helps to create a safer environment for children/young people to live in and play Rugby League in</li> </ul>
Benefits to club and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One person with a child focus and specialist skills in Safeguarding, providing a first port-of-call for anyone with concerns</li> <li>- A safer environment for children and young people to play Rugby League</li> <li>- Increased participation by children and younger people</li> </ul>
Support /Training	Training in the policies and guidelines of the RFL regarding safeguarding and attendance on the sports coach UK 'Safeguarding & Protecting Children' course (or similar as designated by the RFL Safeguarding) and NSPCC certificated RFL 'Time to Listen' training for CWOs
Qualifications &/or skills	Needs to be approachable with a child-focussed approach. Knowledge of core legislation, government guidance and the national framework for child protection (see above). Also a basic knowledge of how abusers 'target' and 'groom' organisations to abuse children, along with an understanding of best practice to prevent this. General administrative skills, along with excellent communication skills. The candidate will be CRB checked.
Volunteer contact	Club Volunteer Coordinator or Club Secretary Is this Volunteering Opportunity open to disabled persons? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

SERVICE AREA WELFARE OFFICER (SAWO)	
Overall Purpose	To be responsible for the implementation and adherence to the RFL Safeguarding & Protecting
Key Duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To act as a source of advice and support on Safeguarding issues and matters</li> <li>- To support the training of coaches, officials and those in contact with children through the game of Rugby League</li> <li>- To act as first point of contact for anyone in the Service Area who has a concern about a child and about poor practice/possible abuse</li> <li>- To ensure the effective implementation of the RFL Safeguarding Policy</li> </ul> <p>In case of concerns and/or allegations of child abuse, it should be stressed that the SAWO is NOT required to make any decision regarding the matter but should follow the guidelines as laid out in the RFL Safeguarding Policy (Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations)</p>

Suggested activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assist the RFL to fulfil its responsibilities to safeguard children and young people at Service Area level &amp; to implement its Safeguarding Plan at club level</li> <li>- To be the first point of contact for staff, volunteers, parents, children and young people where concerns about children's welfare, poor practice or child abuse are identified.</li> <li>- To liaise with the RFL Safeguarding Officer</li> <li>- To ensure the implementation of the RFL reporting and recording procedures</li> <li>- Maintain contact details of local Social Services, Police and know how to obtain Local Safeguarding Children Boards</li> <li>- Actively promote the RFL best practice guidance/code of conduct and ethics within the Service Area</li> <li>- Be part of the Service Area management committee</li> <li>- Promote and ensure adherence to the RFL Safeguarding training plan</li> <li>- Promote and ensure that confidentiality is maintained</li> <li>- Promote anti-discriminatory practice</li> </ul>
Key results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Service Area adheres to the RFL Safeguarding Policy</li> <li>- There is a safe and open environment for the children and young people</li> <li>- All staff are trained and aware of the Safeguarding Policy and its implications on their actions</li> <li>- Good relations are fostered and developed between the SAWO and local agencies i.e. the local police and Social Services</li> <li>- The SAWO plays an active part of the Service Area management committee</li> </ul>
Commitment	Approximately 4 hours per week, flexible, in an on-going capacity
Benefits to self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social interaction</li> <li>- An insight into the management and operation of a Service Area</li> <li>- Involvement with the RFL</li> <li>- Personal and professional development opportunities</li> <li>- Pride in the knowledge that the work of the SAWO helps to create a safer environment for children/young people to live in and play Rugby League in</li> </ul>
Benefits to club & community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One person with specialist skills in Safeguarding, providing a first port-of-call for CWOs and also for anyone with concerns</li> <li>- A safer environment for children and young people to play Rugby League</li> <li>- Increased participation by children and younger people</li> </ul>
Support /Training	Training in the policies and guidelines of the RFL regarding safeguarding and attendance on the sports coach UK 'Safeguarding & Protecting Children' course (or similar as designated by the RFL Safeguarding) and NSPCC certificated RFL 'Time to Listen' training for club welfare officers

Qualifications /skills	Needs to be approachable with a child-focussed approach. Knowledge of core legislation, government guidance and national framework for child protection (see above). Also a basic knowledge of how abusers 'target' and 'groom' organisations to abuse children, along with an understanding of best practice to prevent this. General administrative skills, along with excellent communication skills. The candidate will be CRB checked.
Volunteer contact	Service Area Coordinator Is this Volunteering Opportunity open to disabled persons? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

MATCH OFFICIALS SOCIETY WELFARE OFFICER (MOSWO)	
Overall Purpose	To be responsible for the implementation and adherence to the RFL Safeguarding & Protecting Children Policy and its resulting guidelines by the Society and its members.
Key Duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To act as a source of advice and support on Safeguarding issues and matters</li> <li>- To support the training of officials and those in contact with children through the game of Rugby League</li> <li>- To act as first point of contact for anyone in the Society who has a concern about a child and about poor practice/possible abuse</li> <li>- To ensure the effective implementation of the RFL Safeguarding Policy</li> </ul> <p>In case of concerns and/or allegations of child abuse, it should be stressed that the MOSWO is NOT required to make any decision regarding the matter but should follow the RFL Safeguarding Policy (Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations)</p>
Suggested activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assist the RFL to fulfil its responsibilities to safeguard children and young people at Society level &amp; to implement its Safeguarding Plan at club level</li> <li>- To be the first point of contact for staff, volunteers, parents, children and young people where concerns about children's welfare, poor practice or child abuse are identified.</li> <li>- To liaise with the RFL Safeguarding Officer</li> <li>- To ensure the implementation of the RFL reporting and recording procedures</li> <li>- Maintain contact details of local Social Services, Police and know how to obtain Local Safeguarding Children Boards</li> <li>- Actively promote RFL best practice guidance/code of conduct &amp; ethics within the Society</li> <li>- Be part of the Society management committee</li> <li>- Promote and ensure adherence to the RFL Safeguarding training plan</li> <li>- Promote and ensure that confidentiality is maintained</li> <li>- Promote anti-discriminatory practice</li> </ul>

Key results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Society adheres to the RFL Safeguarding Policy</li> <li>- There is a safe and open environment for the children and young people</li> <li>- Staff are trained and aware of the Safeguarding Policy and its implications on their actions</li> <li>- Good relations are fostered and developed between the MOSWO and local agencies i.e. the local Police and Children's Social Care/Social Services</li> <li>- The MOSWO plays an active part of the club management committee</li> </ul>
Commitment	Approximately 4 hours per week, flexible, in an on-going capacity
Benefits to self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social interaction</li> <li>- An insight into the management and operation of a Society</li> <li>- Involvement with the RFL</li> <li>- Personal development opportunities</li> <li>- Pride in the knowledge that the work of the MOSWO helps to create a safer environment for children/young people to live in and play Rugby League in</li> </ul>
Benefits to club & community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One person with specialist skills in Safeguarding, providing a first port-of-call for anyone with concerns</li> <li>- A safer environment for children and young people to play Rugby League</li> <li>- Increased participation by children and younger people</li> </ul>
Support /Training	Training in the policies and guidelines of the RFL regarding safeguarding and attendance on the sports coach UK 'Safeguarding & Protecting Children' course (or similar as designated by the RFL Safeguarding)
Qualifications /skills	Needs to be approachable with a child-focussed approach. A knowledge of core legislation, government guidance and national framework for child protection (see above). Also a basic knowledge of how abusers 'target' and 'groom' organisations to abuse children, along with an understanding of best practice to prevent this. General administrative skills, along with excellent communication skills. The candidate will be CRB checked.
Volunteer contact	Match Official Society Chair Is this Volunteering Opportunity open to disabled persons? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

## RFL CLUB SAFEGUARDING POLICY

### 1 SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The Club acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every child, young person and vulnerable adult who has been entrusted to its care and is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all of its members. A child or young person is anyone under the age of 18 involved in any club football activity. A vulnerable adult is anyone who may be unable to take care of himself or herself or be unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or exploitation. We subscribe to the RFL Safeguarding & Protecting Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy (Hereafter referred to as the 'RFL Safeguarding Policy' - revised version 2007) and endorse and accept the Policy Statement contained in that document.

### 2 THE KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE RFL SAFEGUARDING POLICY ARE THAT:

- The child's welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration
  - All children, young people and vulnerable adults have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, ethnic origin, gender, special needs, disability, class or social background, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, colour or political persuasion.
  - All suspicions and allegations of abuse or poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- 3 We acknowledge that every child or young person or vulnerable adult who plays or participates in rugby league should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from poor practice and abuse. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in our club.
- 4 The Club has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying. It is noted and accepted that the RFL Safeguarding Policy and related regulations applies to everybody in rugby league whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. This means whether you are a volunteer, match official, helper, coach, club official or medical staff.
- 5 We endorse and adopt the RFL's Safeguarding Policy on recruiting volunteers and staff and will follow the recruitment procedures as set out in that policy and summarised below:
- Develop a job description or role profile
  - As a minimum meet and chat with applicants and where possible conduct interviews before appointing
  - Request and follow up two references before appointing
  - Apply for an RFL CRB Enhanced Disclosure where appropriate in line with RFL policy

All current members of this club with direct access to children, young people and vulnerable adults will be required to complete a CRB Enhanced disclosure via the RFL CRB unit.

It is accepted that the RFL aims to prevent people with a history relevant and significant offending from having contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults and prevent them having the opportunity to influence policies or practice with children or young people. This is to prevent direct sexual or physical harm to children or young people or vulnerable adults and to minimise the risk of grooming within rugby league.

- 6 This club supports the RFL's Whistle Blowing Policy. Any adult or young person with concerns about a colleague can whistle blow by contacting the RFL Safeguarding team (see details below).
- 7 This club has appointed a Club Welfare Officer (CWO) in line with the RFL's role profile. The CWO will take part in training as defined in the RFL's Safeguarding Education and Training Strategy. The CWO is the

first point of contact for all club members and parents/carers regarding concerns for the welfare of any child or young person or vulnerable adult. The CWO will be familiar with the procedures for referring any concerns and will play a proactive role in increasing an awareness of poor practice and abuse amongst club members.

- 8 We acknowledge and endorse the RFL's Anti Bullying Policy. Bullying of any kind is not acceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all players or parents/carers should be able to tell and to know that bullying will be dealt with promptly. Incidents need to be reported to the CWO and in the case of serious bullying or adult on child bullying to the RFL Safeguarding Team.
- 9 The RESPECT Code of Conduct for coaches, players, officials, parents/carers, officials and coaches has been implemented by \_\_\_\_\_ this club. The Club has a fair disciplinary system and clear sanctions to deal with any misconduct at club level and acknowledges the possibility of potential sanctions which may be applied by Leagues or the RFL in more serious circumstances. All prospective members will be informed of these codes.

10 Further advice on Safeguarding matters can be obtained from:

The NSPCC Child Protection 24 hour Helpline 0800 800 5000

The RFL Safeguarding Team on 0844 477 7113 Option 6 or by emailing to [safeguarding@rfl.uk.com](mailto:safeguarding@rfl.uk.com) or writing to the Safeguarding team at the RFL, Red Hall, Red Hall Lane, Leeds, LS17 8NB. General advice is available at [www.rfl.uk.com](http://www.rfl.uk.com)

## GUIDANCE ON SELECTION & RECRUITMENT

It is the unfortunate truth that some individuals do have poor intent regarding children and it is the responsibility of the RFL and clubs to ensure that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children in Rugby League.

The below guidance shows the steps in an ideal recruitment and selection process – the Safeguarding Policy has some useful templates to help in this process.

### PLANNING

Draw up a job description, person specification and minimum requirements, e.g. Rugby League Coaching Level 2, First Aid Certificate.

### ADVERTISING

Advertise locally or online for the position, stating that a clear recruitment process (including CRB checks) will be followed.

### APPLICATION FORM

Application forms are very useful as they are a method to collect information on an applicant and form an important part of any recruitment process. This will give you some information from which to base any recruitment decision on.

### INTERVIEW

The RFL recommend meeting applicant before making a decision on their suitability. The interview will enable the Club to verify any information by checking identification documents, driving licence etc.

The interview does not have to be overly formal and may just be an informal meeting in the Clubhouse.

### REFERENCES

Clubs should always seek at least 2 references before making a recruitment decision. Ideally one reference should be from paid employment or education and the other reference should be in a sporting capacity, ideally in a role similar to the one they are applying for.

### SELF DISCLOSURE AND CRB CHECK

The applicant should be asked to complete a CRB check and a self disclosure form and return them to the RFL for processing. Upon receipt of the CRB Disclosure, the RFL will make a decision on whether or not there is any reason to prevent that individual working within Rugby League.

### INDUCTION

New volunteers should be introduced to the RFL's Safeguarding & Protecting Children Policy, the Club's Safeguarding & Protecting Children Policy and any other policies the Club deems are necessary.

### ONGOING PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

It is important that the performance of the new volunteer is monitored. Consideration should be given to reviewing the progress formally after 3 months and at the end of each season. Consideration should also be given to having a period where the new volunteer is mentored by a senior person at the Club.

## RFL WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

The RFL is determined to ensure that the culture of the sport is one in which it is safe, acceptable and gives confidence to those involved in rugby league to raise concerns about unacceptable practice and misconduct.

What stops people from whistle blowing?

- Concerns about getting it wrong or having misunderstood
- Fear of repercussions such as harassment or victimisation
- Fear of not being believed
- Concerns about starting a chain of events which may spiral out of control
- A belief that it would be disloyal to other volunteers
- Thinking that it doesn't matter or that nobody will get hurt
- Thinking it's not their responsibility

### WHY SHOULD YOU WHISTLE BLOW?

- Everybody involved in rugby league has a responsibility for raising concerns about any unacceptable practice or behaviour
- Whilst it may be difficult, the welfare of children may depend on you and the children and young people in the game have a right to expect that you will do something about your concerns
- It is often the most vulnerable children who are targeted and these children need somebody to safeguard their welfare
- Historically, early effective intervention has been shown to prevent the problem getting more serious or affecting more children
- It can protect or reduce the risk to others
- It can prevent you from being implicated yourself or in the professional game facing a charge for failing to report misconduct

### WHAT SHOULD YOU DO AND WHO SHOULD YOU TELL?

- You should not attempt to deal with any allegation or suspicion yourself (in an emergency contact the relevant emergency service)
- You should inform your Club Welfare Officer or the RFL Safeguarding team
- In particular you should not:
  - Inform the person about whom you have a concern
  - Inform other club officials
  - Start your own investigation or delay in reporting the suspicion

### CONTACT DETAILS

RFL Safeguarding team - 0844 477 7113 Option 6 or [safeguarding@rfl.uk.com](mailto:safeguarding@rfl.uk.com)

What happens next?

- Information will be treated in confidence.



- During the investigation the identity of those raising the concerns will be kept as confidential as possible however it may be necessary for some people to be informed.
- Where possible the RFL will keep those who have provided information informed about the progress and conclusion of the investigation.
- No action will be taken if a concern proves to be unfounded but was raised in good faith
- The RFL rules make it an offence to harass or victimise a whistleblower
- Malicious allegations may be considered a disciplinary offence

If you are concerned, but feel unable, for any reason to report a concern within the RFL, you should be aware that all individuals who report a concern appropriately and in good faith to an external statutory agency will be supported. It is always better to act in response to a concern about potential abuse or about a child's welfare than to fail to take responsibility. In these circumstances please contact the local Police, Children's Social Care or the NSPCC Helpline (Tel: 0808 800 5000).

## RFL DRESSING ROOM POLICY

- Players should be supervised at all times in the dressing rooms by two (2) members of staff who have current enhanced CRB disclosures.
- Adult staff (e.g. coaches, physios, match officials, other volunteers) should not change or shower at the same time using the same facility as players.
- If you are involved in a mixed gender team, separate facilities should be made available for each gender and each group should be supervised by staff of the same gender.
- Volunteers should not offer to do tasks of a personal nature which a young person could do for themselves unless requested to do so by a parent/guardian, although, please note that some young people may need assistance with tying laces, fitting head guards etc)
- Parents do not have an automatic right to be present in the dressing room.
- If a young person is uncomfortable changing or showering in public no pressure should be placed on them to do so. Encourage them to do this at home.
- If your club has players with disabilities involve them and their carers in deciding how they should be assisted and ensure they are able to consent to the assistance that is offered.
- Any staff, medical or otherwise, of the opposite gender to the team, for example, a female physio working with a male team, must not be present in the dressing rooms whilst players are getting showered or changed.
- No photographic equipment should be allowed in the changing room environment. This includes cameras, video cameras, mobile phones with photographic capabilities etc.

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### STATEMENT OF INTENT

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all participants so they can participate in Rugby League in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, all players, parents/guardians, volunteers and coaches should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We urge all of our clubs to be TELLING clubs. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Club Welfare Officer or any committee member.

### WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be: -

- Emotional      being unfriendly, excluding individuals deliberately, tormenting, e.g. hiding kit, threatening gestures)
- Physical        pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist            racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual            unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic   because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal            name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber            All areas of internet, such as email, internet chat rooms, message boards, instant messenger services. Also includes misuse of cameras, video cameras or mobile phones, e.g. text messages.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO REPORT BULLYING?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Individuals who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

All Rugby League Clubs have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

All individuals involved in Rugby League have a responsibility to report any issues of bullying to the Club Welfare Officer or another appropriate person.

### OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

- All players, coaches, officials, volunteers and parents/guardians should:
- Have an understanding of what bullying is.
- Know what their club policy is, how to report any issues and how to deal with any issues that have been reported.
- Have an appreciation of the signs and indicators of bullying.
- To ensure clubs take bullying seriously and have the appropriate policies and procedures in place.
- To assure players and parents/guardians that they will be supported if bullying is reported.
- To make it clear that bullying will not be tolerated in Rugby League.

### WHAT ARE THE INDICATORS OF BULLYING?

A child may indicate that he or she is being bullied by certain signs or by displaying certain behaviours. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child:

- Says he/she is being bullied.
- Is unwilling to go to training sessions or matches, especially if they used to enjoy these activities.
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence.
- Feels ill before training sessions or matches.
- Comes home with clothes torn or equipment damaged.
- Has possessions go 'missing'.
- Asks for money or starts to steal money (to pay the bully).
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

Or in more extreme cases, if a child:

- Starts stammering
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or otherwise unreasonable
- Stops eating
- Attempts or threatens suicide or running away

The above signs may indicate other problems, however, bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT BULLYING IS TAKING PLACE?

1. Report bullying incidents to the Club Welfare Officer or another member of the committee. If no-one from the Club is available contact the RFL's Safeguarding Team.
2. In cases of serious and/or persistent bullying the matter should always be referred to the RFL Safeguarding Team immediately.
3. Parents/guardians should be informed and be asked for a meeting to discuss the issues.
4. If necessary and appropriate, the Police should be consulted.
5. Any allegations of bullying should be investigated thoroughly and speedily and the acts of bullying stopped quickly.
6. An attempt should be made to help the bully (or bullies) change their behaviour.
7. If mediation fails and the bullying continues, the club should initiate disciplinary action.

### RECOMMENDED CLUB ACTION

If the Club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation they should follow the procedure outlined below.

- Consider reconciliation - it may be that a genuine apology can solve the problem.
- If this fails or is not appropriate, a small panel (including the Club Welfare Officer) should meet with the parents/guardians of the child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken which should be agreed by all parties.
- The same panel should meet with the alleged bully and his/her parents/guardians so they can give their views on the allegations. Once again minutes should be taken and agreed.
- If the panel believe that bullying has taken place, the individual should be warned and put on notice that any further incidents may lead to a temporary or permanent suspension from the club. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between the parties is appropriate.
- It may be appropriate for the parents/guardians of the bully or the bullied player to be asked to attend training sessions.
- The Club Welfare Officer and other members of the committee should monitor the situation to ensure bullying does not reoccur.
- All coaches involved with the individuals concerned should be made aware of the situation and what to do if bullying is observed.

In the case of serious bullying or an adult bullying a child the RFL Safeguarding Team should be informed. Cases of this nature will be dealt with under the Safeguarding Case Management procedure or may be referred to Police and/or Social Services if appropriate.

#### **CAN BULLYING BE PREVENTED?**

- The Club will have a written constitution/code of conduct, which includes acceptable standards of behaviour for all players, parents/guardians, volunteers and coaches.
- All players, parents/guardians, volunteers and coaches will receive a copy of the constitution/code of conduct upon joining the club or at the start of each season if appropriate.
- The Club Welfare Officer will raise awareness of bullying and why having a robust anti-bullying policy matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, consideration will be given to meeting with all players, parents/guardians, volunteers and coaches to discuss the issues openly and constructively – although with no specific reference to individual incidents.
- The Club will display a copy of the RFL's Anti-Bullying Poster and Policy in an appropriate place – more copies are available on request or can be downloaded from the RFL website.

#### **WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING?**

Cyberbullying is the use of communications technology to deliberately upset someone. This is an extension of face-to-face bullying and should be treated just as seriously. Cyberbullying can take place via mobile phones, emails, internet chat rooms, message boards or instant messaging services.

#### **HOW CAN IT BE PREVENTED?**

- Children's use of technology should be monitored to prevent inappropriate usage.
- Children should be made aware of the repercussions their actions may have - what may be seen as joke at one end may not be received as one because the sender cannot see the impact of their message.
- 'Blocking' the bully or removing from 'buddy' lists so that the bully cannot send messages to the individual concerned.
- Advising the individual being bullied not to reply or retaliate. They should not delete messages received as these are potentially vital evidence.

- Advising children to set their profiles on social networks to 'Private' so only their approved friends have access.
- Coaches should acknowledge the vulnerability of children in relation to communication methods that can be concealed from others, including parents and other responsible adults, by modelling best practice and only communicating by email or text with parents/guardians not with children directly

#### **WHAT IS RACIST BULLYING?**

Racist bullying is motivated by a prejudice against a particular race, nationality or religion. Racist bullying can be physical, emotional, verbal, physical or sexual.

Do not assume that Caucasian children cannot be the victims of racist bullying.

#### **HOW CAN IT BE PREVENTED?**

It should be made clear that racist bullying, like all forms of bullying, will not be tolerated.

The Club should make it clear that racist language will not be tolerated at any time in order to create an atmosphere where all players, parents/guardians, volunteers and coaches know that it is inappropriate and feel comfortable to report incidents.

All players should be educated regarding different nationalities, races, cultures and religions. Most prejudices are the result of ignorance.

#### **WHAT IS HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING?**

Homophobic bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) people, or where the individual being bullied has LGB parents/guardians or is referred to as LGB, even if he/she is not. Homophobic bullying can be physical, emotional, verbal, physical or sexual.

#### **HOW CAN IT BE PREVENTED?**

It should be made clear that homophobic bullying, like all forms of bullying, will not be tolerated.

The Club should make it clear that homophobic language will not be tolerated at any time in order to create an atmosphere where all players, parents/guardians, volunteers and coaches know that it is inappropriate and feel comfortable to report incidents.

#### **WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?**

RFL Safeguarding Team

0844 477 7113 Option 6

safeguarding@rfl.uk.com

www.therfl.uk.com - About Us - In League Together

KIDSCAPE - a voluntary organisation committed to help prevent bullying

0207 730 63300

www.kidscape.org.uk

Anti-Bullying Alliance - an organisation aiming to reduce bullying and create safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn.

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

## RFL POLICY - RECORDING IMAGES OF CHILDREN

In general the RFL believes that recording images of children's involvement in Rugby League whether as photographs or DVDs can be beneficial. In order to ensure that the potential for any misuse of images is minimised, however, it is important that this policy is followed.

### CONCERNS ABOUT RECORDING IMAGES

In order to understand the reasons for the various rules and restrictions relating to the recording of images it is important to understand how they can be misused.

The key concerns regarding the use of images of children are:

- People taking inappropriate photographs or recorded images of children
- The possible identification of children when a photograph is accompanied by inappropriate information - in particular this can be used to give credence to a stranger pretending that they know a child with a view to abduction or grooming or may allow an estranged parent to track down children in contravention to a court order
- The inappropriate use, adaptation or copying of images for use on websites showing child abuse images.

### BENEFITS OF RECORDING IMAGES

The RFL believes that the benefits of recording images in a responsible manner outweighs the potential concerns and would recommend that parents/guardians agree to the images of their child being recorded within the terms of this policy.

### MATCH DVDS

The RFL believes that the recording of matches has many benefits for children in particular:

- DVDs are an invaluable coaching aid and are used as such extensively in the professional game
- DVDs promote an effective and fair on field disciplinary process
- Recorded evidence can provide key evidence in cases of alleged breaches of this Safeguarding Policy and/or the RESPECT code of conduct
- Providing family mementoes

### TEAM/PLAYER PHOTOGRAPHS

The RFL believes that photographs of teams and players provide many benefits for children and the sport in particular:

- Promoting positive images of children playing Rugby League
- Recording significant events both for clubs and for individual children
- Produce a record and sense of history for a club
- Providing mementoes for families

In order for the recording of these images to be used to deliver these benefits it is important that the concerns are understood and acted upon by following the guidelines set out below.

### RECORDING IMAGES GUIDELINES

- Ensure Parents/Guardians/children have given their informed consent for the taking and publication of photographic images and have signed and returned the Player Profile form.
- Ensure all children are appropriately dressed for the activity taking place which in the vast majority of cases will mean full playing kit.
- Any photographs or recording should focus on the activity rather than a particular child
- Personal details which may make a child vulnerable such as their address should never be revealed.
- If a player is named avoid using their photograph - if a photograph is used avoid naming the player – newspapers may use full names sometimes operating under the Press Complaints regulations
- In line with the RFL's Equality & Diversity policy photographs and recordings should represent the diverse range of children participating in Rugby League.
- Anyone taking photographs at an event must have a valid reason for doing so and must have completed a Recording of Images form.
- Any concerns about inappropriate or intrusive photography should be reported to the RFL Safeguarding team.
- The use of mobile phone or other cameras is forbidden in the dressing room

### GUIDELINES TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE MEDIA OR OTHERS WHEN TAKING PHOTOS AT EVENTS

- Anybody who wants to take photographs or otherwise record images must have a valid reason for doing so ie has a child taking part or is a club official photographer or media
- The photographer/camera person should make themselves known to the organiser or person in charge prior to taking any images
- The photographer/camera person must sign the RFL Recording of Images form
- The photographer/camera person must have bona fide ID and be able to produce it on request
- Clubs or organisers must never allow photographers to have unsupervised access to players or to have one-to-one photo sessions at events

### HOW TO DEAL WITH SOMEONE WHO IS RECORDING IMAGES & HAS NOT SOUGHT PERMISSION

There will be occasions from time to time when someone you do not recognise who has not signed a Recording Images form who will be taking photographs or recording images at a Rugby League event. If this situation arises you should have the confidence and courage to challenge the individuals. You should:

- Approach the individual & check who they are
- If they have not signed a Recording Images form ask them to stop recording
- If an individual is observed taking photographic images in a way that raises concerns or is 'suspicious' and does not desist when challenged, the Police should be informed.



## RECOGNISING ABUSE IN RUGBY LEAGUE

It is not the responsibility of those working or volunteering in Rugby League to decide that abuse is happening but it is the responsibility of everybody involved in Rugby League to report any concerns they may have either to the RFL Safeguarding team or to Children's Social Care (formerly known as Social Services).

Everybody involved in Rugby League needs to understand the different categories of abuse and to be able to recognise the signs.

### PHYSICAL ABUSE

#### WHAT IS IT?

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

#### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE?

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips
- Cigarette burns, bite marks, broken bones or scalds
- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed eg wearing long sleeves in summer
- Depressed or withdrawn behaviour
- Running away from home
- Thinking that the application of violence is acceptable

#### EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL ABUSE IN RUGBY LEAGUE

- Use of drugs to enhance performance
- Intensity of training or competition exceeding the child's physical development
- A coach, volunteer or spectator hits a child
- Use of exercise as a form of punishment

### EMOTIONAL ABUSE

#### WHAT IS EMOTIONAL ABUSE?

The persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the young person's emotional development. It may involve conveying to young people that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on young people, .i.e too much pressure regarding winning matches, this can be particularly true for very talented players. It may involve causing young people to feel frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person very nervous and withdrawn. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment

of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

#### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE?

- A failure to thrive
- Sudden speech disorders
- Neurotic behaviour
- Excuses made to avoid going to training or to a match
- Being unable to play
- Fear of making mistakes
- Self harm

#### EXAMPLES OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE IN RUGBY LEAGUE

- Constant criticism
- Name calling and sarcasm
- Bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations consistently.

### SEXUAL ABUSE

#### WHAT IS SEXUAL ABUSE?

Sexual abuse is when girls and/or boys are abused by adults (either male or female) who use children or young people to meet their own sexual needs. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve contact including penetrative acts (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non- penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Talking to children or young people in a sexually explicit manner is also a form of sexual abuse.

#### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE?

- Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital/anal areas
- Sexually transmitted diseases, vaginal discharge or infection
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares
- Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age
- Sexual language or drawings
- Bed wetting

- Self harm or mutilation
- Saying they have secrets they can't tell anybody
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- Not allowed to have friends
- Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

#### EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL ABUSE IN RUGBY LEAGUE

- Coaching techniques, which involve physical contact with young people, could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may be unnoticed
- The power of the coach(or other volunteer) over young performers, if misused, may also lead to abusive situations developing.
- The position of a coach (or other volunteer) to young performers can mean that the coach (or other volunteer) may be the only person to whom the child can disclose incidents of sexual abuse.
- Sexual abusers can use rugby league to groom children. Most abusers plan their abuse of children by seeking work or volunteering opportunities which puts them in contact with children, making friends with a child, making friends with a child's parents/carers, appearing trustworthy, providing attention or gifts, giving the child a place in the team, make threats of harm about the consequences of telling etc.

#### NEGLECT

##### WHAT IS 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 the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal drug abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

##### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF NEGLECT?

- Constant hunger, stealing food
- Constantly dirty or smelly
- Loss of weight or constantly underweight
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions
- Complaining of being tired all the time
- Having few friends
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised

##### EXAMPLES OF NEGLECT IN RUGBY LEAGUE

- A coach not ensuring children are safe
- Exposing children to undue cold, heat or to unnecessary risk of injury.
- Not having water and/or refreshments available either before, after or during training sessions or matches.

#### BULLYING

##### WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, in circumstances where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. There are a number of types of bullying:

- Physical hitting, pushing, kicking, theft, any unwanted physical contact or use of violence
- Verbal racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling, spreading rumours, sarcasm, teasing
- Emotional isolating an individual from their peers, being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding kit or equipment, threatening gestures)
- Cyber emails, chat rooms, message boards, social networking sites, instant messaging services, SMS text messaging, phone calls. Also includes misuse of cameras or camera phones
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality

##### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF BULLYING?

- A child says he or she is being bullied
- Is unwilling to go to club sessions
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Feels ill before training sessions
- Has clothes torn or equipment damaged
- Has possessions which go missing
- Asks for money or steals money
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

##### IN EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES:

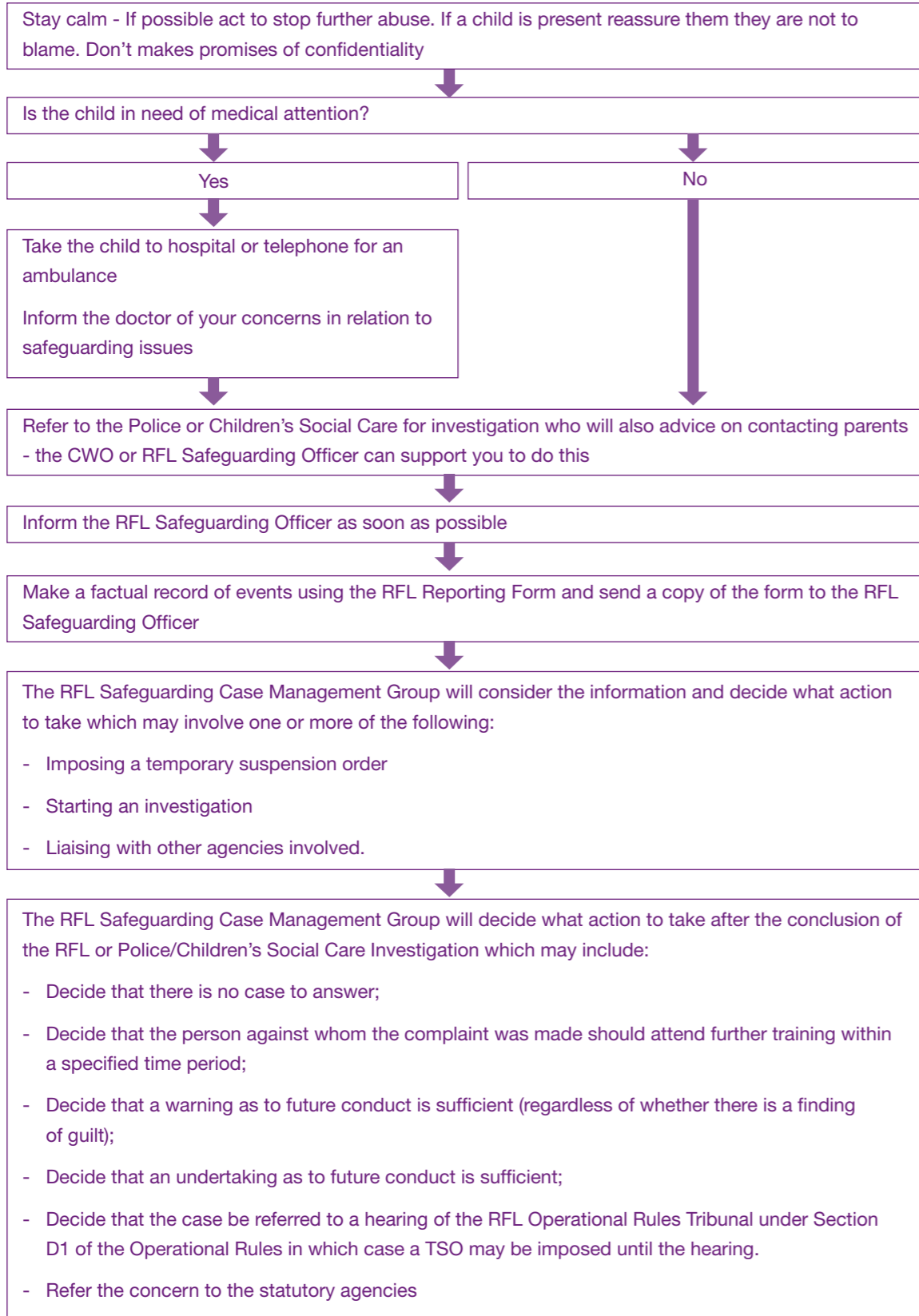
- Starts stammering
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away

##### EXAMPLES OF BULLYING IN RUGBY LEAGUE

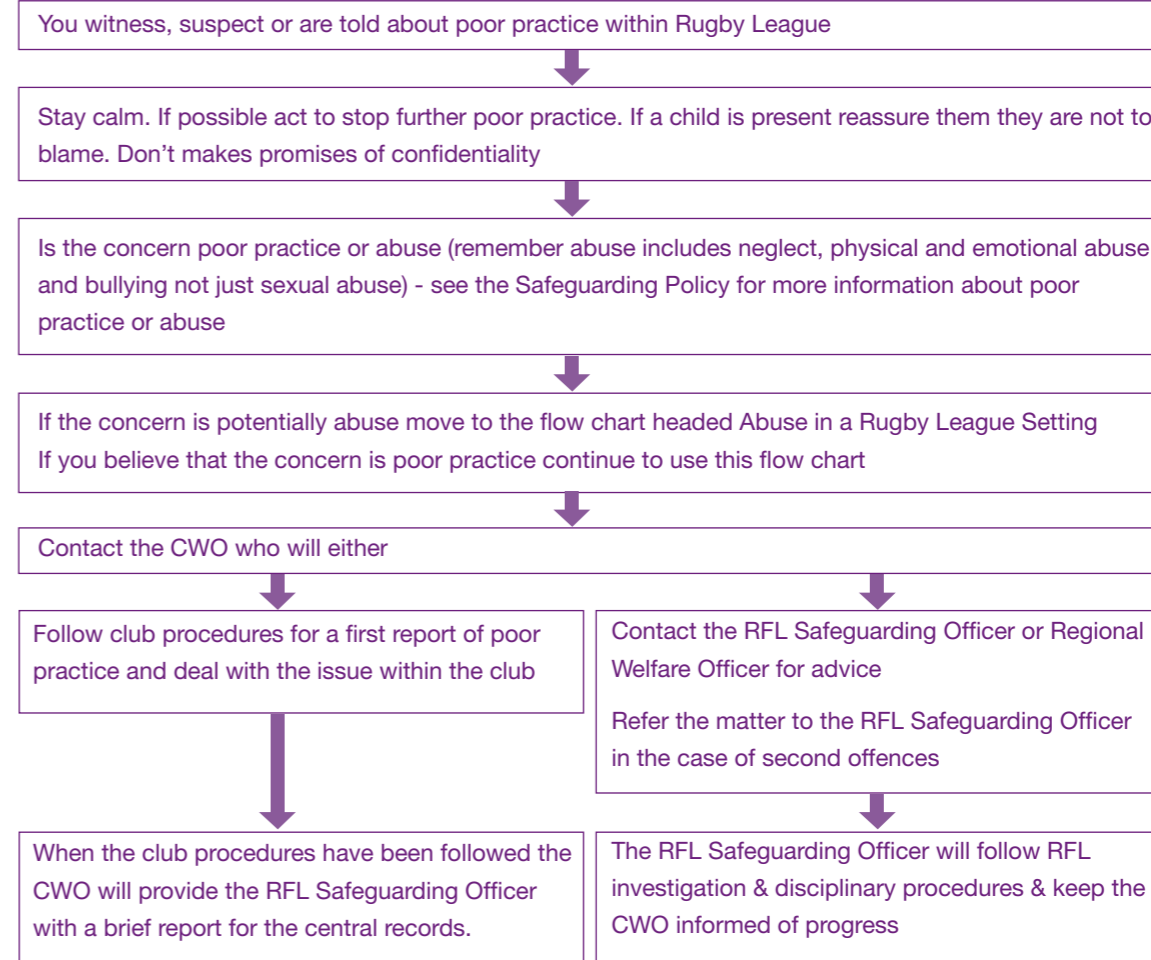
- A parent who pushes their child too hard
- A coach who shouts at or humiliates children
- A child or children who actively seek to make rugby league an unhappy experience for another child or children

## RESPONDING TO ABUSE IN A RUGBY LEAGUE SETTING

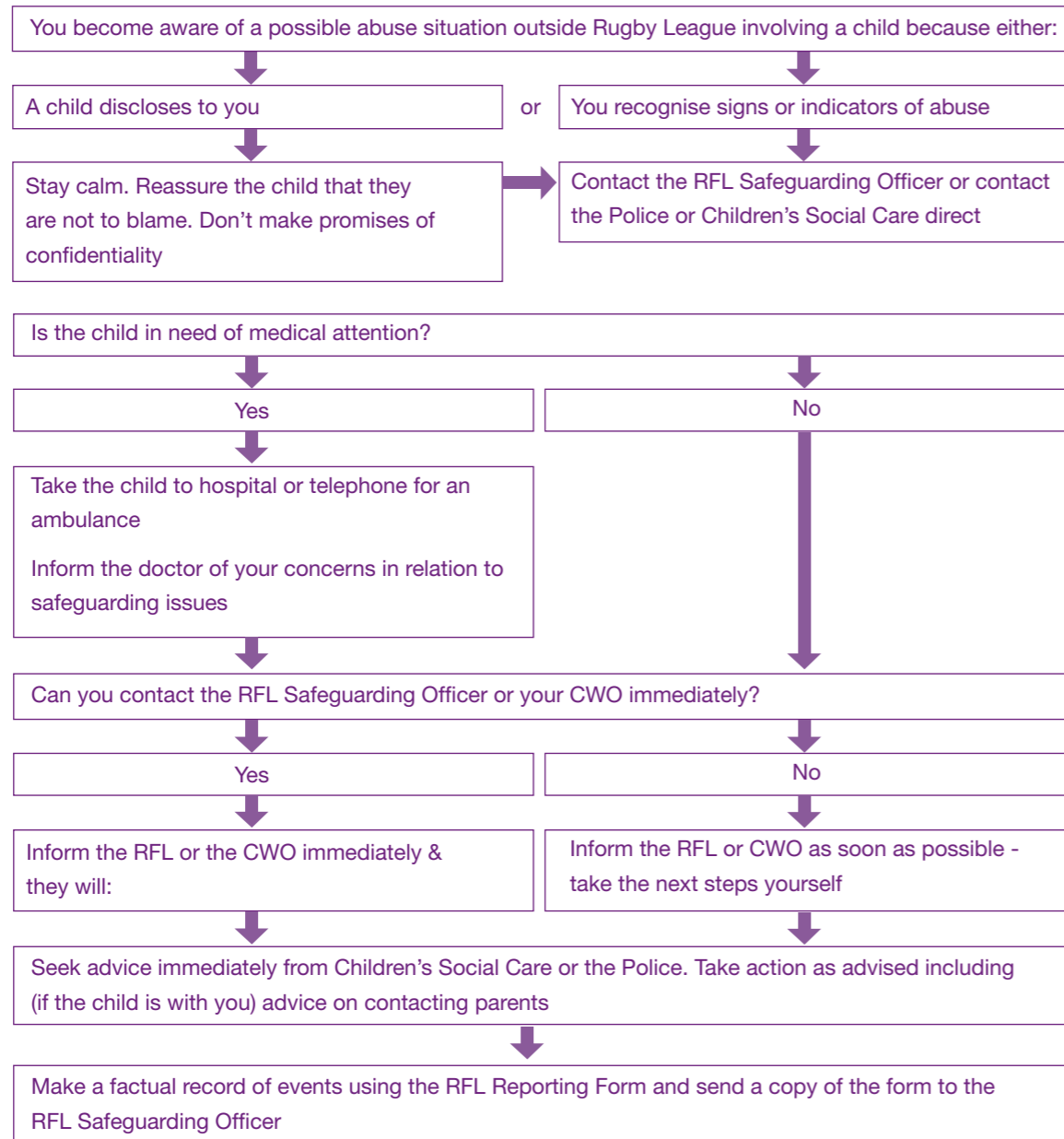
### YOU WITNESS, SUSPECT OR ARE TOLD ABOUT ABUSE IN A RUGBY LEAGUE SETTING



### RESPONDING TO POOR PRACTICE IN A RUGBY LEAGUE SETTING



## RESPONDING TO ABUSE OUTSIDE RUGBY LEAGUE



## GUIDE TO CLUB PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING CASES OF POOR PRACTICE

If a Club Welfare Officer becomes aware of a disclosure of abuse or received concerns or allegations about coaches or volunteers the CWO should report this to the RFL Lead Safeguarding Officer. The RFL Lead SO will report the issue to the Safeguarding Case Management Group (SCMG).

The SCMG will consider the initial report and decide whether this is a case which can be dealt with by the Club or whether it should be dealt with centrally. If it has been decided that it can be dealt with at club level then the following procedures should be adopted.

A Disciplinary Panel should be convened which should consist of:

- Three club members
- None of whom should have been involved in reporting the case or have a conflict of interests (eg a close friend of the individual who is subject to allegations)
- At least one of whom should be a senior management member from the club
- If the complaint relates to a coaching matter one member should have coaching experience

The person against whom the complaint has been made must be:

- Informed of the nature of the complaint in writing
- Provided with a copy of any report or other information which will be considered by the Panel
- Be invited to attend the meeting which should be held at a convenient time for them;
- Receive sufficient notice of the hearing;
- Be given the opportunity to put their side of the story and call witnesses
- Be allowed to hear or see evidence supporting the complaint; however minors should not be required to give evidence in person and can provide evidence in writing. There may also be information which is confidential to the complainant or where the source has requested anonymity for fear of retribution.

### TEMPORARY SUSPENSION

It may be in the best interests of all parties and of resolving the issue if the individual concerned is temporarily suspended pending the conclusion of the matter. Temporary suspension is a neutral act and should not be used punitively.

When the Panel has reached a decision it must:

- Inform the accused and put the decision in writing
- Inform the RFL in writing
- Make sure that its decision is carried out

Powers of a Club Disciplinary Committee

- Warning as to future conduct
- Temporary suspension
- Coaching under supervision
- Order the defendant to undertake the sports coach UK Safeguarding & Protecting Children workshop
- Order to defendant to attend a relevant RFL coaching course

The RFL is available to review cases and to provide a right of appeal where there has been a breach of procedure.



## RFL GUIDANCE ON TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

The RFL appreciate that clubs could not operate without the goodwill of volunteers and parents ensuring that children are returned home or transported to matches or training in a private car.

The vast majority of coaches and volunteers will help out through their genuine desire to see children participate and develop in Rugby League. Unfortunately we must face the reality that a minority of others will join a club to gain access to children and create an air of acceptability about their role, justifying their close contact with children. Developing credibility is an essential part of any abuser's 'grooming process', not only grooming the child to 'make love to their minds' (quote from a convicted paedophile) but also grooming other coaches or parents i.e. becoming the best volunteer and making themselves indispensable. The last stage to enable someone to offend against a child is viewed as grooming the environment i.e. creating a justifiable reason for getting the child alone.

The RFL encourage coaches and volunteers not to take children on journeys in their car alone.

If all alternatives have been exhausted and an adult has to transport a child alone there are a number of safety measures that should be put in place to minimise the risk:

- Clubs should ensure that the driver like all coaches/volunteers who have access to children in your organisation should have agreed to a CRB check being carried out on them.
- Clubs should ensure that the driver has a vehicle which is fit for purpose, i.e. passed its MOT and is adequately insured.
- Clubs should check that the driver has an appropriate and valid driving licence.
- Parents/guardians should be informed of the person who will be transporting their child, the reasons why and how long the journey will take.
- A person other than the planned driver should talk to the child about transport arrangements to check they are comfortable about the plans.
- The driver should attempt to have more than one child in the car.
- When dropping children off after a match or training session, coaches/volunteers should alternate which child is dropped off last. Ideally two children would be left off at an agreed point i.e. one of their family homes.
- Ensure that children are aware of their rights and they have someone to turn to or report any concerns they may have. If a culture of safety is created within your club then the child is more likely to talk to another person if they are feeling uncomfortable about a situation.
- Children should wear an appropriate seatbelt that complies with current legislation, and be instructed to behave responsibly in vehicles at all times.
- The driver should have emergency breakdown cover, access to a mobile phone and contact details for the parent/guardian of the children they are transporting.

If parents make arrangements between themselves about transport to matches this is a private arrangement. However if the club/coach make the arrangements eg who will travel with whom, they become liable in the event that something goes wrong if correct procedures haven't been followed.

### AWAY FIXTURES

Travelling to away fixtures is a regular event for many junior clubs. Trips may vary from short journeys across town to play another local team or involve more complicated arrangements involving overnight stays. But even what may appear as the most straightforward of trips will require some level of planning.

Communication with all parties is a key issue when planning any journeys: -

- Children - they should be aware of the travel plans, venue and time for collection, time of return and any costs. Children should also have a clear understanding of what standard of behaviour is expected of them.
- Parents - should be made aware of the above and must have completed a consent form detailing any medical issues that the relevant people should be aware of. Parents should also have the name and contact details of the relevant person in the event of an emergency.
- Other coaches/volunteers - need to be made aware of what their responsibilities are in advance of the trip. If the trip is a long journey, it is important that all coaches / volunteers have an itinerary and each others contact details.

### LATE COLLECTIONS

These can present clubs and coaches with particular difficulties. Parents/guardians should be provided with guidelines addressing the issue and outlining their responsibility and the consequences of late collections. Clubs should have contact numbers for parents/guardians and if possible be provided with an alternative contact number. Parents/guardians should have a contact number for the club/coach to inform them of emergencies and possible late collections.

In the event of a late collection, coaches/volunteers should: -

- Attempt to contact the parent/guardian.
- Make contact with the Club Welfare Officer to inform them of the situation.
- Wait with the young person. Wherever possible do so in the company of other people.
- Remind parents of the policy in relation to late collections.

In the event of a late collection, coaches/volunteers should not: -

- Take the child to their own home or to any other location.
- Ask the child to wait alone with them in their vehicle.
- Send the child home with another person without parental permission.

Parents should be informed that it is not the responsibility of the Club to transport children if the parent/guardian is delayed.

## SAFEGUARDING DISABLED CHILDREN IN RUGBY LEAGUE

Disabled children need the opportunity to experience sporting opportunities and experiences open to all children in a safe environment. To help achieve this in Rugby League, they and their families may need additional information, help and support. Rugby League clubs, coaches and teachers, as well as relevant voluntary and support staff, will require training and advice to ensure they are inclusive of, and safeguard disabled children.

The RFL Safeguarding Policy reflects the needs to safeguard all children within Rugby League however for disabled children, the RFL recognises the guidance in the government document “Working Together to Safeguard Children” (2006) which states

“Expertise in both Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and in disability has to be brought together to ensure that disabled children receive the same levels of protection from harm as other children”.

The RFL are aware that the most valuable resource within clubs are the employees and volunteers who appreciate the value of Rugby League to disabled children and have the will and desire to ensure they can become fully integrated members of the Rugby League community. Rugby League is committed to meeting the needs of disabled people and to develop opportunities in the Rugby League for both disabled children and adults.

Rugby League is in its infancy in relation to sporting opportunities for disabled participants although there is an enthusiasm for and a commitment to developing more opportunities. Wheelchair rugby had its inception in 2005 and there are currently 2 well established teams with several new clubs in the early stages of development. Tag rugby is more established and there are opportunities for young people with learning disabilities and some physical disabilities to participate in a competition culminating in the weekend festival in South Leeds every September. 2008 will also see the beginning of links with Actionnaires and the RNIB to develop Rugby League for blind and visually impaired children and young people.

The game is in the early stage of the development of Rugby League for disabled people generally and in particular relatively small numbers of disabled children are currently involved in Rugby League. This is therefore an opportune moment for all those involved in developing and facilitating Rugby League for disabled children to simultaneously consider Safeguarding issues so that policies and procedures can be implemented at the outset thereby giving those involved the confidence that the game is starting with a sound understanding of the issues.

The RFL is currently developing a disability strategy which aims to develop appropriate pathways for all disabled players, whether that is via the mainstream game or via one of the derivatives. These crucial decisions will be made in conjunction with the disabled player and all staff involved will ensure that they employ a social model of disability when looking at barriers to participation and will not allow stereotyping and assumptions about the abilities of disabled participants when advising which version of the game they would be encouraged to try.

In order to ensure that there is a greater awareness of the needs of disabled players in order to ensure that they develop to their full potential coaching staff will be encouraged to undertake additional modules and continuous professional development (cpd) units on disability in sport.

### MAKING RUGBY LEAGUE ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

Rugby League must be safe and accessible for all children. The RFL Safeguarding Policy is an important tool to assist clubs to safeguard all children from harm within the Rugby League, whether they are disabled or non-disabled.

To achieve accessibility, the RFL has recognised that the Rugby League environment and the rules of the game may need to be modified to meet the needs of some disabled people. For example although

wheelchair Rugby League is generally played for 2 x 40 minutes sessions this may be made shorter in order to accommodate the individual needs of disabled players. In addition Tag rugby has been developed which eliminates the contact element and may therefore be more appropriate for some disabled players.

RFL will work with the clubs to ensure their facilities are accessible and will work actively with the Disabled Supporters Association in order to overcome physical barriers to participation. Where appropriate additional or adapted equipment may be provided and Rugby League clubs will work with other organisations with expertise in this field in order to source and access specialist equipment.

To understand and meet the Safeguarding needs of disabled children in your club you need to have a knowledge and understanding of disability

### THE DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2004 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Disability can be recognised as:

- Physical disability (e.g. limitations to dexterity or mobility)
- Sensory impairment (e.g. visual, hearing)
- Mental health difficulties
- Chronic illness (e.g. asthma, epilepsy, diabetes)
- Medical conditions, which may cause pain or other symptoms, which affect study (e.g. side effects of treatment, poor attention, poor concentration), Asperger's Syndrome/Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Specific learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia)
- Any other condition which has a significant effect on an ability to study.

It must be accepted the above classifications can overlap and some children will have more than one disability.

### UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY & IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Disabled people / person /spectator is the preferred term and the term used by the RFL as this reflect the social model of disability which emphasises that people with impairments are disabled by society not by their impairment. For example “Wheelchair users can't use the facilities because the venue is inaccessible; therefore, we need to modify the building and the services we provide.”

The social model was not developed as some form of “denial” of impairment, it was developed in order to inform society, which includes disabled people, of the real reason that individuals are not able or allowed to take a full and active role in society.

It follows then, if society in general, organisations and those individuals working within them acknowledge, understand and implement the ‘social model’, there would be far less discrimination against disabled people and greater access to services and the society as a whole.

By contrast the medical model perspective rests with the belief that a person's impairment or medical condition causes the disability. For example “Wheelchair users can't use the facilities because of their impairment, as it prevents them from getting up the steps at the entrance of the venue”. This approach is based on seeing disability or impairment as the problem and as such it does not expect society to take any responsibility for overcoming barriers faced by disabled people.

## STRATEGIES FOR CLUBS TO ADOPT TO ENSURE DISABLED PLAYERS ARE ABLE TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

### COMMUNICATION

Clubs should work with the disabled child and their family/carers to understand the disabled child's individual needs and identify barriers to participation. Once this has been achieved the club should work toward eliminating or overcoming barriers where possible so that the disabled child has an opportunity to be integrated into mainstream Rugby League where possible and when appropriate supported to play one of the many derivatives offered by Rugby League

The child and their parent or carer will have information they can share with the Rugby League club on how best to meet the child's needs to allow them to access Rugby League. Additionally some childhood disabilities progress with the age of the child and need constant reassessing medically. It is important that Rugby League clubs work continuously with the child and parent or carer to ensure they are kept aware of relevant changes to reduce any increased risk of harm to the child in the sporting venue.

Some children may have multiple disabilities. If so the sport must look at the needs of the child in a holistic manner and define how to meet all the needs, not just the one area of disability.

Avoid assumptions and stereotypes

It is important that club staff do not rely simply on assumptions about who may be vulnerable. This is particularly the case where disability is concerned. Some disabilities, such as dyslexia and mental health needs are 'invisible' and as such it may be less likely that club staff will recognise their needs.

One of the initial barriers to developing good working relationships with disabled children and their families or carers is the fear of causing unintended offence by the use of incorrect or inappropriate language. In order to address this issue please refer to the RFL guidance on inclusive language. Copies can be requested from the Equality and Diversity manager.

### FIND A BALANCE

Sometimes club staff will find themselves in the difficult situation of balancing the needs on an individual with the needs of other young people and staff at the club. For example Tourette's is a syndrome that causes the person to often use inappropriate and verbally abusive words in an uncontrollable and unintentional manner. It is known that a number of top sportspersons have this disability and allowances have to be made by others who are involved with them in the sport. In the case of children and young people, the club has to consider the vulnerability of that individual as well as those who hear and observe this behaviour, and consider how they can accommodate children and young people living with this disability whilst at the same time safeguard all its young club members. The key to this is honest communication and discussion with all parties and where necessary education and awareness raising among the young people, their parents and carers and the wider club staff. A flexible and creative approach may also be necessary, at all times maintain the social model of disability uppermost in your mind, this will help you to look at wider barriers – be they physical, social, educational or attitudinal!

### STAFF TRAINING

There are a number of training options open to club staff such as the sports coach UK courses Equity in your Coaching and Coaching Disabled Performers. The RFL is also developing modules as part of its Coaching courses to cover Wheelchair RL.

### MEDICAL INFORMATION

Within the Safeguarding Policy the RFL identifies the need for Rugby League clubs to have a medical form completed by the parent, carer and, if applicable, the child which includes information regarding the child's disability. This is also an opportunity to include any other individual needs or difficulties. Players and their parents and carers should be encouraged to complete this section honestly – disability or other health needs does not necessarily prevent someone participating in Rugby League, indeed Rugby League is committed to making the game accessible to everyone and will take positive steps to ensure every effort is made to meet those needs. In order for players to have confidence in this Policy and be honest the RFL will endeavour to identify and promote role models within the game. In addition players will be assured that with full information they will be better able to ensure that the player will be able to meet their full potential and not compromise their health thereby increasing the time they are able to enjoy playing Rugby League

The RFL has a medical form (see Safeguarding Policy) that gathers the required information with additional information on any changes in the child's life situation that may cause a change in behaviour e.g. death of a relative, divorce

Remember some disabilities such as asthma may require minimal or no specific action by the club. However the knowledge of that disability will allow the club to have an awareness of what action to take in an emergency i.e. a severe asthma attack brought on by an injury or incident.

Where, following discussions with the player, club and parents/carers it is decided that the mainstream game would not be appropriate or sufficiently meet the needs of the young person and where that decision is free of any discrimination then the club should make every effort to signpost the young person to one of the Rugby League derivatives such as wheelchair and tag rugby.

### ASSESSMENT OF NEED

From the information received on the medical form, and through discussion with the child and their parent or carer, the club can identify how to best meet the child's needs to enable them to access the sport in full.

Below are some points to consider in completing an assessment of need:

- Does the club have adequate access for the young person?
- Does the club have the required facilities (see above)
- When playing away matches does the host club have required access/facilities?
- Does the club have the required staff trained?
- Does the child or young person need additional help from a "support person" to access the Rugby League?
- What aids are required and can the club provide them. Do the parents have aids that can be used? i.e specialist wheelchairs - charities can help with this
- Does the young person need personal care and if so who will provide it? Bear in mind the requirements of Safeguarding children to meet this need.
- Medication - see above
- What advice can the parent/carer give to avoid/deal with possible problems in behaviour.
- What, if any, support services are provided by the local authority or other agencies to enable them to participate in everyday activities including education? Ask for consent from the parent/carer to seek advice or support from these sources
- How will the club ensure the disabled young person is safeguarded from harm or injury while in the venue?

- Is an agreement with parents on attending the venue during sessions required?
- What action should be taken if a medical emergency occurred relating to any disability?

N.B. This is not an exhaustive list

It has to be recognised that some medical conditions can be hard to manage in a mainstream club if they place other members at risk of harm. Such decisions to exclude or refuse membership must be taken in line with appropriate guidance from the RFL Equality & Diversity Manager and the Safeguarding Team. In some cases specialist clubs such as Wheelchair RL clubs may provide the best solution.

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF DISABILITY

### CHRONIC ILLNESS

Among the more common are asthma, allergies, diabetes, sickle cell anaemia or thalassaemia.

Being diagnosed with a chronic medical condition presents many challenges for both the child and their families. For parents and children having access to information, treatment options and related resources such as sport, can make a significant difference in their quality of life.

Health issues such as severe asthma, diabetes and epilepsy, are likely to require the young person to have regular medication. The Club Welfare Officer and appropriate coaches must be aware of what medication is prescribed as well as what action to take if the child becomes unwell. Rugby Leagues clubs must ensure that, while supporting the child and parent or carer, they do not overstep what is appropriate for the club to undertake in terms of care. Knowledge of what to do and how to cope in an emergency is always important but it may be considered necessary that, in order to safeguard the child, a parent or other responsible adult should always be in attendance. For those illnesses where reaction time is vital, a plan should be developed with the child and parent/carer to deal with emergencies so that a clear line of action and responsibility can be followed.

It may be appropriate, only with the expressed permission of the individual concerned and or their parent or carer to share some information in order to raise awareness and challenge myths and fears among their peers or club staff. For example a young person with diabetes may be required to inject insulin and they may prefer to make this explicit to their peers rather than risk being caught injecting insulin with the risk of misguided assumptions about drug abuse! Safe arrangements should be made for storage of medication if the parent/carer is not present throughout activities.

### AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS (ASD)

There are a group of lifelong developmental disabilities, affecting how a person relates to or communicates with other children and adults. Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders experience difficulties known as “the triad of impairment – social interaction, social communication and imagination”. The National Autism Society recognises that “the prevalent rate of ASD of 1 in 110 indicates that all services (with children) should expect to come into contact with young people on the spectrum”.

In Rugby League we need to recognise that ASD can cause problems not only for the individual concerned but for both fellow team members and coaches that are involved with them. It has to be remembered that this is not an issue of “poor behaviour” but a behaviour pattern that is part of ASD.

All clubs will need to look at what they can and can't provide to meet an individual child's needs and complete a risk assessment with a decision on whether that risk is acceptable and manageable, and allows the club to safeguard the needs of both the individual concerned and other club members to whom the club has a duty of care.

### ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD) & TOURETTE'S SYNDROME

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and attention deficit disorder (ADD) refer to a range of behaviours associated with poor attention span including impulsiveness, restlessness and hyperactivity, as well as inattentiveness, and may make it more difficult for children to learn or obey instructions and also cause misunderstandings when socializing.

Tourette's syndrome is often linked to or part of the symptoms of ADHD. Tourette's may cause children to use inappropriate and verbally abusive words in an uncontrolled and unintentional manner.

Clubs will need to liaise with parents/carers and possibility professionals who help the player outside the club to draw up a plan to support the player within the club. The plan will need to be agreed by all concerned, eg coaches, parents and the child.

### LEARNING DISABILITIES

Children with learning disabilities may require more help to learn new skills. Coaches need to be made aware of the player's disability so that they understand that the child may need more help to participate in training sessions and games. It is important that parents communicate with the club to prevent assumptions being made that the child is being disruptive or naughty.

### PROGRESSIVE OR POTENTIALLY TERMINAL ILLNESSES

With children with progressive illnesses such as cancer it is important to ask open questions that will allow the disabled person and /or their parents and carer to share information openly about any progressive illnesses that may be active or in remission but could have an impact in terms of possible health and safety issues.

Progressive illnesses by their very nature are likely to change with time; the young person's ability to undertake the Rugby League may become more limited and more specialist provisions may be required to enable them to remain in your club. For example a child being able to maintain his involvement in a Rugby League club for as long as possible is of primary importance following a diagnosis of a potentially terminal illness such as cancer.

### AWARENESS OF INCREASED VULNERABILITY TO ABUSE

The RFL Safeguarding Policy states:

- The RFL is committed to ensuring that all children who play Rugby League have a safe positive and fun experience, whatever their level of involvement.
- The welfare of all children is paramount.
- All children within Rugby League, regardless of age, gender, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, ability or disability, have the right to enjoy the game in an environment safe from abuse of any kind.

To meet the duty of care to safeguard children Rugby League clubs should recognise that both historical and recent research which recognises that disabled children can be at greater risk of abuse and that the presence of multiple impairments appears to increase the risk of both abuse and neglect.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2006) states

“The available UK evidence on the extent of abuse among disabled children suggests that disabled children are at increased risk of abuse, and that the presence of multiple disabilities appears to increase the risk of both abuse and neglect. Disabled children may be especially vulnerable to abuse for a number of reasons”.



Some disabled children may:

- have fewer outside contacts than other children;
- receive intimate personal care, possibly from a number of carers, which may both increase the risk of exposure to abusive behaviour, and make it more difficult to set and maintain physical boundaries;
- have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse;
- have communication difficulties which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening;
- be inhibited about complaining because of a fear of losing services;
- be especially vulnerable to bullying and intimidation; and/or
- be more vulnerable than other children to bullying and abuse by their peers.

Working Together further states that “Safeguards for disabled children are essentially the same as for non-disabled children”.

Welfare Officers, coaches and club helpers must have an awareness of the need to safeguard all children and specifically recognise additional risks to disabled children.

#### **THE CLUB MUST BE AWARE THAT:**

- Disabled children and young people may be more likely to suffer from BULLYING and EMOTIONAL ABUSE from both young people and adults. Sometimes the “abuser” does not realise the hurt being caused by inappropriate comments but sometimes they do and the bully is picking on the person least able or likely to complain. Disabled children and young people may be subject to PHYSICAL assaults of a minor or major nature. They may be less able to remove themselves from a situation; an adult may become frustrated by their lack of response, or may be the outcome physical bullying.
- SEXUAL ABUSE of those in society who are unable to either stop or understand acts that are taking place is unfortunately not rare. Good Safeguarding practice within the club, especially in terms of the need for a young person to be assisted in personal care, either during the sports activity or in the changing room, can help prevent the possibility of such abuse arising.
- A disabled young person may be left in an inappropriate situation or not be seen to receive appropriate care. The club officers and members must always report concerns if a parent or carer is viewed as failing to give proper care and attention to meet the needs of a disabled child.
- Disabled children can be EXCLUDED by inappropriate acts of individuals or the club itself. The RFL are an inclusive organisation and expect clubs to do all they can to be inclusive to all children.

#### **WELFARE OFFICERS AND OTHER RESPONSIBLE ADULTS IN THE CLUB CAN ASSIST IN SAFEGUARDING DISABLED CHILDREN BY:**

- Attending appropriate Safeguarding vulnerable groups training and where possible additional disability awareness training
- making it common practice to help disabled children make their wishes and feelings known in respect of their care and treatment;
- making sure that all disabled children and young people know how to raise concerns if they are worried or angry about something, and giving them access to a range of adults with whom they can communicate.
- Ensuring that disabled children with communication difficulties should have available to them at all times a means of being heard;

- Making an explicit commitment to, and understanding of all children’s safety and welfare among providers of services used by disabled children;
- Ensuring close contact with families, and a culture of openness on the part of services; and
- Providing guidelines and training for staff on good practice in intimate care; working with children of the opposite sex; handling difficult behaviour; consent to treatment;
- Producing anti-bullying strategies;
- Responding appropriately to any reported incidents and following guidance policies and procedures as laid down by RFL. This will ensure consistence of approach and ensure that all cases are given equal consideration.

#### **ACCESS AND FACILITIES**

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) states that where a provision, criterion or practice applied by a Club or any physical feature of a building occupied by a club places a disabled person who is or who seeks to be a member of the club at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with members of the club who are not disabled persons then it is the duty of the club to take such steps as it is reasonable, in all the circumstances of the case, for it to have to take in order to prevent the provision, criterion or practice, or feature, having that effect.

The majority of Rugby League clubs fall under the jurisdiction of the DDA and as such clubs should consider the following:

- 1 Does the club have adequate access for the young person concerned? If not can it be adjusted to meet the child’s needs?
- 2 Is the club accessible and does it have accessible toilet/shower facilities. Consider the needs of people which visual and hearing impairments as well as wheelchair access. i.e. using contrasting colours around door frames, information on audio format, hearing loops in public and training areas. Plain English and use of symbols in information and publicity as well as trying not to use print font any less than Ariel 14
- 3 Are the common areas available to the disabled young person i.e. the club house?
- 4 Is there proper access to the field of play for all disabled young people as players, match officials, coaches or spectators
- 5 Does the child or young person need special adaptations within the venue to meet their needs to access Rugby League.

And:

- 6 Would it be deemed a “reasonable” measure for a club to provide for the required changes? This is essentially about balancing the legal requirement to make adjustments with constraints facing the club, i.e. costs, limitations of building etc. If the club encounters any difficulties it may be expedient to contact the Rugby League Disabled Supporters Association who will provide advice and mediation if required, or contact other disability groups - see end of this document for a list of disability organisations.

#### **WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?**

It is important that clubs seek to increase their knowledge about disabilities, particularly when working with disabled children and young people. Parents, carers and the young people themselves are usually the experts on their disability and the impact on the young person. However at times additional support and information may be useful to the club.

Learning Disabilities UK	<a href="http://www.Learningsisabilitiesuk.org.uk">www.Learningsisabilitiesuk.org.uk</a>
National Autism Society	<a href="http://www.nas.org.uk">www.nas.org.uk</a>
Tourette 's syndrome (UK) Association	<a href="http://www.tsa.org.uk">www.tsa.org.uk</a>
The British Dyslexia Association	<a href="http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk">www.bdadyslexia.org.uk</a>
Attention Hyperactivity Deficit Disorder	<a href="http://www.adhd.org.uk">www.adhd.org.uk</a>
Asthma UK	<a href="http://www.asthma.org.uk">www.asthma.org.uk</a>
British Deaf Sports Council	<a href="http://www.britishdeafsportsCouncil.org.uk">www.britishdeafsportsCouncil.org.uk</a>
Diabetes UK	<a href="http://www.diabetes.org.uk">www.diabetes.org.uk</a>
National Deaf Children's Society	<a href="http://www.ndcs.org.uk">www.ndcs.org.uk</a>
EFDS Head Office	<a href="http://www.efds.co.uk">www.efds.co.uk</a>
Mencap Sport	<a href="http://www.mencap.org.uk">www.mencap.org.uk</a>

The RFL acknowledges the work of the ECB in producing this guidance and allowing it to be amended for use in the sport of Rugby League.

## GUIDANCE NOTES ON WHO SHOULD BE CRB CHECKED

The CRB definition of who should be CRB checked at an enhanced level is:-

- Those positions whose normal duties include caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of those under 18 years of age.
- Those whose normal duties include supervising or managing an individual in his/her work in a position described above.
- Anyone with access to records of those under 18 years of age.
- The 'great and the good' in organisations providing services to children.

The RFL interpret this to include the positions within the game:

- All Coaches involved in coaching Youth & Junior rugby up to & including U18s
- First Aiders & Medical Staff
- Parent Representatives
- All Junior Committee Members
- Club Welfare Officer
- Service Area Welfare Officer
- Match Officials Society Welfare Officer
- Player Performance Managers & their staff
- Coaching Co-ordinators
- Match Officials
- Club Secretary & Registration Secretaries
- Club Chairperson
- Any other voluntary roles surrounding Youth & Junior rugby

This list is not exhaustive. If you have any queries on whether or not an individual needs to be CRB checked please phone the RFL Safeguarding Team on 08444 777113 Option 6 or email [safeguarding@rfl.uk.com](mailto:safeguarding@rfl.uk.com).

### ACCEPTING CRB CHECKS FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS

It is best practice for all people working within Rugby League who have significant contact with children or vulnerable adults to have a valid enhanced level CRB check conducted by the RFL.

The CRB lead time is between 2 and 8 weeks so the importance of forward planning is obvious.

Short term appointments should not prevent the post holder/applicant completing a CRB check - this in itself can act as an important deterrent against poor practice and poor intent.

As from July 2007 the RFL will not accept CRB checks that have been carried out by any other body.

The RFL has taken advice on this and there are real risks in carrying Disclosures from one job to another.

Although this may seem draconian, the RFL have no guarantees over the procedures that other organisations have in place regarding carrying out effective risk assessments, and as such we must insist that all CRBs are conducted by the RFL.

Upon receipt of a positive disclosure certificate the RFL carries out a thorough risk assessment by suitably trained staff; without seeing the original CRB disclosure certificate, the RFL cannot be sure of the status of any individual's disclosure. Equally, in some cases, not all of the information elicited through the CRB process appears on an individual's certificate.

There can be no exceptions from this policy.

The cost of CRB checking does not have to be passed onto the consultant/applicant where the level of payment made to the consultant is such that this would discourage participation but could be met by the RFL budget holder wishing to use the consultant, ideally through the use of grants which are available for this type of expenditure. In addition it should be remembered that there is no charge for CRB checking volunteers - please see pricing structure below.

Volunteer	Free of Charge
Paid position within Rugby League	£36
Position not within Rugby League	£50

The CRB definition of a volunteer is: "Any person engaged in an activity which involves spending time, unpaid (except for travel and other approved out of pocket expenses), which aims to benefit some third party other than or in addition to a close relative".

It is sometimes assumed that, as the person is not directly employed or salaried the position is voluntary. However, if the person engaging in the activity receives a payment, in excess of expenses they actually incur, or benefits directly themselves, the position will not satisfy the CRB's definition of a volunteer.

To identify an application as a volunteer, simply place an X in the box at section Y8.

The CRB may invoice for any application which it considers does not meet the definition, and take retrospective action to recover the cost of any previously issued free-of-charge Disclosures. The CRB may also consider imposing sanctions, including the suspension or cancellation of an organisation's or a Countersignatory's registration status for those who continue to be non-compliant with the Conditions of Registration.

#### CRB RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

All CRB Disclosures received by the RFL will be considered by the Operations Department and where there is a positive disclosure the Operations Department will carry out a risk assessment (RA) to decide whether the person is suitable to work with vulnerable groups.

Steps in the process

- 1 CRB with disclosures received by RFL
- 2 Initial review by Operations Manager
- 3 Detail mitigating/aggravating factors, check self declarations and nominal index
- 4 Initial decision made. Disclosures will be classified Low Risk, Medium Risk or High Risk.

#### LOW RISK

If, following assessment, the risk is considered to be low the RFL will inform the person and the club that the RFL does not consider there is any reason why the person should not work unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults within the sport.

#### MEDIUM RISK

If the risk is considered to be medium the disclosure will be referred to the Safeguarding Case Management Group (SCMG). The Operations Department will continue to make further enquiries which may include interviewing the person and will then carry out a second RA. If following further investigation the RA is

considered to be low then following approval from the SCMG the RFL will inform the person and the club that the RFL does not consider there is any reason why the person should not work unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults within the sport. If following the further investigation the RA is still considered to be medium then the SCMG will consider the case and decide whether the person be:

- (i) allowed to work with vulnerable groups subject to such checks and balances as the SCMG thinks fit which may involve the person giving permission for the concerns arising from the CRB process to be discussed with the club concerned; or
- (ii) subjected to a Temporary Suspension Order (TSO) while further enquiries are carried out.

#### HIGH RISK

If the initial RA is considered to be high risk the disclosure will be referred to the SCMG who will consider the RA and may implement a Temporary Suspension Order (TSO) while further enquiries are carried out.

Following the investigation a further RA will be carried out. If the RA is now considered Low or Medium (in a situation where an order that the person be allowed to work with vulnerable groups subject to appropriate checks and balances is appropriate) they will receive a letter stating that the RFL does not consider there is any reason why the person should not work with children or vulnerable adults within the sport.

If the RA is still considered Medium (in a situation where a TSO is appropriate) or High, the subject of the TSO will be informed that the TSO will remain in place in which case the subject will have a further 28 days in which to lodge a right of appeal to the RFL. Any such appeal will be heard by the Operational Rules Tribunal acting in accordance with the appeal procedures set Section D1 of the RFL Operational Rules.

All decisions in the process will be in accordance with section D4 of the RFL's Operational Rules and the underlying principle will be the welfare of the child is paramount.

At all stages of review, the reviewer will consider the information arising from the CRB process first, before considering the initial decision.

Any enquires carried out as a result of the risk being assessed as medium or high, may be carried out by the Operations Department or maybe referred to a Compliance Investigator.

All CRB applicants will receive a letter informing them whether or not the RFL considers if there is a reason why they should not be employed in the post they applied for. The Employer (Club) will also receive a copy of this letter. The Club will only be informed of the outcome of the recruitment process, not the detail of the information arising through the CRB process except in the event of the applicant giving permissions for information to be shared to enable appropriate arrangements to be made by the club (eg supervision arrangements) or where the RFL is directed to do so by statutory agencies.

Any conflict of interest (i.e. knowing the applicant) should be declared and noted.

#### RFL POLICY REGARDING SECURE STORAGE, HANDLING, USE, RETENTION AND DISPOSAL OF CRB DISCLOSURES

As an organisation (Registered Body) using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, the RFL complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of disclosures and Disclosure information. The RFL also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information. This written policy is included in the RFL's Safeguarding Policy and is also on the Safeguarding section on the RFL's website - [www.rfl.uk.com](http://www.rfl.uk.com).

## STORAGE AND ACCESS

All Disclosure information is kept securely in a non-portable, lockable cabinet. Access is strictly controlled to the 3 people for whom it is necessary to have access as part of their duties. Certificates will be stored initially by month of receipt in the 'Month' folder, and then alphabetically by surname.

## HANDLING

In accordance with Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and recognise that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

## USAGE

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

## RETENTION

The RFL do not keep Disclosure information for longer than 6 months, this is to allow a fair recruitment decision to be made and to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. A copy of the letter which is sent to the individual will be kept with the certificate.

If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer than 6 months, we will give full consideration to the data protection and human rights implications for the individual before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding safe and secure storage will prevail.

Diary notes are in place to remind RFL staff to destroy CRBs at the end of 6 months - see below for destruction timetable

Month of receipt	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Month of destruction	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun

## DISPOSAL

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately destroyed by secure means, e.g. shredding. While awaiting disposal, Disclosure information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle. We will not keep photocopies of Disclosure certificates. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue, name of subject, type of Disclosure, the position applied for, the club/organisation the position is with, the unique reference number of the Disclosure, details of any risk assessment, details of the recruitment decision and address and date of birth of the applicant for renewal purposes.

## RFL POLICY REGARDING THE RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS.

As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, the RFL complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of

Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed. This written policy is included in the RFL's Safeguarding Policy and is also on the Safeguarding section on the RFL's website - [www.rfl.uk.com](http://www.rfl.uk.com).

The RFL is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff, volunteers, potential volunteers and users of our services, regardless of race, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

This written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders is available to all Disclosure applicants prior to their application in the above locations.

We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records.

A Disclosure is only requested after an assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position applied for.

It should be made clear to all potential volunteers that an enhanced CRB check will be undertaken as part of their recruitment process and that they are ineligible to begin their duties until clearance has been granted from the RFL - a copy of which will be sent to the club/organisation that wishes to deploy/employ them.

Any Disclosures which are returned with convictions or any other information listed will be subject to a risk assessment - see Risk Assessment Process document for further information. The RFL will only use suitable members of staff during the risk assessment process.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed which raises concerns, with the applicant, although refusal to do so, or the unavailability of the applicant, may lead to the RFL objecting to the application.

At any interview or conversation with an applicant we will ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place and that the main issues recorded for future reference. Interviews, where it is deemed necessary, will be conducted by trained and experienced personnel. Interviews or conversations will discuss any convictions or other matters that may be relevant to the position applied for.

Failure to co-operate or reveal any information that may be directly relevant to the position sought will lead to the RFL rejecting the application.

We make every subject of a CRB Disclosure aware of the existence of the CRB Code of Practice and where to obtain further information.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar an individual from working or volunteering within Rugby League.



## RFL POLICY ON MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Coaches & other volunteers may have to deal with challenging behaviour from the children or young people in their care. These guidelines aim to encourage good practice, suggest some strategies and sanctions which can be used and identify unacceptable sanctions or interventions never to be used.

### PRINCIPLES

The guidelines are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All those involved in the sport including children, coaches & volunteers should have clear guidelines about the standard of behaviour which is expected and the processes for dealing with behaviour which is unacceptable
- Children must never be subject to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading
- Some children's behaviour may be caused by medical or psychological conditions. Coaches & volunteers may need additional help including discussing the child's needs with parents and/or carers and possibly from external agencies that already support that child (see the RFL Safeguarding Disabled Children Policy)
- Rugby League can be a beneficial experience for all children and children should only be excluded from the sport in exceptional cases

### PLANNING

Coaches should plan their sessions to take into account the needs of all of the group. If there are any children who pose any difficulties strategies to deal with those difficulties should be considered in advance.

### AGREEING ACCEPTABLE & UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Coaches, volunteers, parents & children should be involved in developing an agreed statement of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and the sanctions to be applied. This should be done at the start of a season

### MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

The response to challenging behaviour should always be proportionate to the behaviour and should be explained to the child and their parents. The following may be considered:

- Time out - from the training session or individual work.
- Reparation - the act or process of making amends.
- Restitution - the act of giving something back.
- Behavioural reinforcement - rewards for good behaviour, consequences for negative behaviour.
- De-escalation of the situation - talking through with the child.
- Increased supervision by staff/volunteers.
- Use of individual 'contracts' or agreements for their future or continued participation.
- Sanctions or consequences e.g. missing a training session or match.
- Seeking additional/specialist support through working in partnership with other agencies to ensure a child's needs are met (this requires parental consent unless the child is felt to be 'at risk' or 'in need of protection').
- Temporary or permanent exclusion

The following should never be permitted as a means of managing a child's behaviour:

- Physical punishment or the threat of such.
- Refusal to speak to or interact with the child.
- Being deprived of food, water, access to changing facilities or toilets or other essentials
- Verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation.

Coaches & volunteers should involve parents if sanctions are needed regularly. As a last resort if a child presents a high level of danger to him or her self or others he or she may need to be suspended from the club's activities.

### PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

Physical intervention should always be avoided unless it is absolutely necessary to prevent a child injuring themselves or others or causing serious damage to property. Physical contact to prevent or stop something happening should always be conscious decision making rather than a reaction ie coaches should ask themselves if this is the only option to manage the situation.

The following must always be considered:

- Contact should be avoided with buttocks, genitals and breasts. Staff/volunteers should never behave in a way which could be interpreted as sexual.
- Any form of physical intervention should achieve an outcome that is in the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern and/or other children involved in the incident.
- Staff/ volunteers should consider the circumstances, the risks associated with employing physical intervention compared with the risks of not employing physical intervention.
- The scale and nature of physical intervention must always be proportionate to the behaviour of the young person and the nature of harm/ damage they might cause.
- All forms of physical intervention should employ only a reasonable amount of force -ie the minimum force needed to avert injury to a person or serious damage to property - applied for the shortest period of time.
- Staff/volunteers should never employ physical interventions which are deemed to present an unreasonable risk to children or staff/volunteers.
- Staff/volunteers shall never use physical intervention as a form of punishment.
- Physical intervention should NOT involve inflicting pain
- Where children are identified as having additional needs or behaviours that are likely to require physical intervention this should be discussed with parents/carers and where necessary it may be necessary to have a suitably trained support work to allow the child to participate safely

Physical intervention should be recorded on an Incident Report Form and handed to the Club Welfare Officer as soon as possible.

### VIEWS OF THE CHILD

There should always be a debriefing session for coaches, volunteers, parents and children after an incident where physical intervention was used. This should include an opportunity to talk about the incident and about how the child can continue to participate safely.

### RFL POLICY ON PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

The RFL has a detailed policy on the use of Physical Intervention which is available on request.

# RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB SAFEGUARDING POLICY

## 1 SAFEGUARDING POLICY

\_\_\_\_\_ Rugby League Club acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every child, young person and vulnerable adult who has been entrusted to its care and is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all of its members. A child or young person is anyone under the age of 18 involved in any club football activity. A vulnerable adult is anyone who may be unable to take care of himself or herself or be unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or exploitation. We subscribe to the RFL Safeguarding Policy (revised version 2007) and endorse and accept the Policy Statement contained in that document.

## 2 THE KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE RFL SAFEGUARDING POLICY ARE THAT:

- The child's welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration
  - All children, young people and vulnerable adults have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, ethnic origin, gender, special needs, disability, class or social background, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, colour or political persuasion.
  - All suspicions and allegations of abuse or poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- 3 We acknowledge that every child or young person or vulnerable adult who plays or participates in rugby league should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from poor practice and abuse. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in our club.
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Rugby League Club has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying. It is noted and accepted that the RFL Safeguarding Policy and related regulations applies to everybody in rugby league whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. This means whether you are a volunteer, match official, helper, coach, club official or medical staff.
- 5 We endorse and adopt the RFL's Safeguarding Policy on recruiting volunteers and staff and will follow the recruitment procedures as set out in that policy and summarised below:
- Develop a job description or role profile
  - As a minimum meet and chat with applicants and where possible conduct interviews before appointing
- Request and follow up two references before appointing
- Apply for an RFL CRB Enhanced Disclosure where appropriate in line with RFL policy
- All current \_\_\_\_\_ Rugby League Club members with direct access to children, young people and vulnerable adults will be required to complete a CRB Enhanced disclosure via the RFL CRB unit.
- It is accepted that the RFL aims to prevent people with a history relevant and significant offending from having contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults and prevent them having the opportunity to influence policies or practice with children or young people. This is to prevent direct sexual or physical harm to children or young people or vulnerable adults and to minimise the risk of grooming within rugby league.

6 \_\_\_\_\_ Rugby League Club supports the RFL's Whistle Blowing Policy. Any adult or young person with concerns about a colleague can whistle blow by contacting the RFL Safeguarding team (see details below).

7 \_\_\_\_\_ Rugby League Club has appointed a Club Welfare Officer (CWO) in line with the RFL's role profile. The CWO will take part in training as defined in the RFL's Safeguarding Education and Training Strategy. The CWO is the first point of contact for all club members and parents/carers regarding concerns for the welfare of any child or young person or vulnerable adult. The CWO will be familiar with the procedures for referring any concerns and will play a proactive role in increasing an awareness of poor practice and abuse amongst club members.

8 We acknowledge and endorse the RFL's Anti Bullying Policy. Bullying of any kind is not acceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all players or parents/carers should be able to tell and to know that bullying will be dealt with promptly. Incidents need to be reported to the CWO and in the case of serious bullying or adult on child bullying to the RFL Safeguarding Team.

9 The RESPECT Code of Conduct for coaches, players, officials, parents/carers, officials and coaches has been implemented by \_\_\_\_\_ Rugby League Club. The Club has a fair disciplinary system and clear sanctions to deal with any misconduct at club level and acknowledges the possibility of potential sanctions which may be applied by Leagues or the RFL in more serious circumstances. All prospective members will be informed of these codes.

10 Further advice on Safeguarding matters can be obtained from:

The NSPCC Child Protection 24 hour Helpline 0808 800 5000

The RFL Safeguarding Team on 0844 477 7113 Option 6 or by emailing to [safeguarding@rfl.uk.com](mailto:safeguarding@rfl.uk.com) or writing to the Safeguarding team at the RFL, Red Hall, Red Hall Lane, Leeds, LS17 8NB.

General advice is available at [www.rfl.uk.com](http://www.rfl.uk.com)

## PLAYER PROFILE & PARENTAL CONSENT FORM FOR RUGBY LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

SECTION 1 PERSONAL DETAILS - PLAYER AND PARENT/GUARDIAN		
Name of Child	Name of Parent/Guardian	Child's Date of Birth
Address		Postcode
Work Tel Parent/Guardian	Mobile Parent/Guardian	Home Tel No
SECTION 2 EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS		
Name of alternative adult who can be contacted in an emergency	Phone number(s) for alternative named adult	Relationship of this adult to child ie Aunt
CONSENT STATEMENT FROM PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN - Please tick each box where you agree		
Legal Authority to provide consent		
<input type="checkbox"/> I confirm that I have legal responsibility for the child named above and that I am entitled to give this consent		
<input type="checkbox"/> I confirm that to the best of my knowledge, all information provided on this form is accurate, and that I will undertake to advise the Club of any changes to this information		
Consent to participate		
<input type="checkbox"/> I agree to the child named above taking part in the activities of the Club		
Medical Consent		
<input type="checkbox"/> I give my consent that in an emergency situation, the Club may act in loco parentis, if the need arises for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment which in the opinion of a qualified medical practitioner may be necessary. I also understand that in such an occurrence that all reasonable steps will be taken to contact me or the alternative adult which I have named in Section 2 of this form.		
<input type="checkbox"/> I confirm that to the best of my knowledge, my child does not suffer from any medical condition other than those detailed by me in the section below		
MEDICAL INFORMATION - Please detail below any important medical information that the Club needs to know (eg allergies, medical conditions, current medication, special dietary needs, injuries etc.		
I confirm that I have read, or been made aware of, the club's policies concerning		
<input type="checkbox"/> Changing/showering	<input type="checkbox"/> Transport	
<input type="checkbox"/> Photography/videoing	<input type="checkbox"/> Anti Bullying & RESPECT	
<input type="checkbox"/> I understand and agree to the responsibilities which I and my child have in connection with these policies	<input type="checkbox"/> I consent to the Club photographing or videoing my child's involvement in rugby league under the terms and conditions in the Photography & Videoing Policy.	
Signed Parent/Legal Guardian	Printed Name of Parent/Legal	Date of signature
<small>DATA PROTECTION – The Club will use the Information provided on this form to administer his/her rugby league activity at the Club and any activities in which he participates through the Club. In some cases this may require the Club to disclose Information to the Playing League, Service Area or RFL. In the event of a medical issue or a safeguarding concern arising, the Club may disclose certain Information to doctors and/or police, children's social care, the Courts and/or probation officers and potentially to the RFL or the RFL investigators.</small>		

## RUGBY LEAGUE APPLICATION FORM

Full name of individual	
Any other names known by And relevant dates	
Position Applied for	
Club	
Address	
Postcode	
Tel / Mobile	
CURRENT/MOST RECENT EMPLOYMENT	
Employer	
Position	
Dates of employment	
Duties of employment	
PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT	
Employer	
Position	
Dates of employment	
Duties of employment	
PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT	
Employer	
Position	
Dates of employment	
Duties of employment	

**QUALIFICATIONS**

Academic/school (not essential for those applying to voluntary posts to complete)

**Coaching Qualifications/Experience**

Previous experience of working with young children in a voluntary or professional capacity:

**REASON FOR APPLYING**

**DATA PROTECTION NOTICE**

I declare that the information provided on this form is, to the best of my knowledge correct, true and complete. By signing this form you are providing your explicit consent to the above named club processing personal data in connection with all matters relating to your application for employment/ appointment. Details contained on this form will be limited to those only directly involved in the selection process. All records relating to recruitment are retained by the club, in order to fulfill legal responsibilities under Data Protection legislation.

I agree to abide by the Rugby League Safeguarding Policy.

Signed

Date

PLEASE NOTE APPLICANTS MUST ALSO COMPLETE A CRB ENHANCED DISCLOSURE APPLICATION FORM & SELF DISCLOSURE FORM AS DIRECTED

IT IS THE POLICY OF THIS ORGANISATION TO OBTAIN TWO REFERENCES FROM SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

**RUGBY LEAGUE VOLUNTEER APPRAISAL FORM**

Position

Full Name

Club

Please indicate the level of performance in line with the traits in the left hand column.

Personal Qualities	Good	Satisfactory	Below Satisfactory
Approachable			
Leadership			
Respect			
Confident			
Committed			
Motivated			
Personal Development (CPD)			
Child Focused			
Equitable			
<b>Skills</b>			
Planning			
Implementation			
Evaluation			
<b>Communication</b>			
Verbal			
Listening			
Problem Solving			
<b>Games Specific (where relevant)</b>			
Technical			
Tactical			
Physical			
Mental			

**Comments**

Has the volunteer abided by the principles of the Equality and Diversity Policy? Yes/No

Comments



Final Comments

Comments by Appraisee

Signature of Appraisee

Print Name

Date

Signature of Appraiser

Print Name

Date

Position within Club

Telephone No.

## RUGBY LEAGUE REFERENCE FORM

Full name of individual

Position Applied for

The above individual has been offered the above position subject to receipt of satisfactory references and CRB Enhanced Disclosure. The post involves substantial access to children.

As an organisation committed to the welfare of and protection of children, we are anxious to know if there is any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children or young people.

All information will be treated with due confidentiality and in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance. We would appreciate you being extremely candid, open and honest in your evaluation of this person. If you have any concerns and wish to speak to the RFL Safeguarding Officer directly, they can be contacted directly on 07850483736 or 0844 477 7113 option 6.

How long have you known this applicant and in what capacity?

What attributes does this applicant have that would make them suited to this work?

Based on your knowledge of the applicant, please indicate their ability across the following criteria.

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Responsibility				
Maturity				
Self motivation				
Can motivate others				
Energy				
Trustworthiness				
Reliability				
Control of Temper				

If you have any concern about the applicant's suitability to work with young people, please detail below or continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Signature of Appraiser	
Print Name	Date
Position within Club	
Telephone No.	

## RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB 100% ME ANTI-DOPING POLICY

Club Name	
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### THE CLUB ACKNOWLEDGES ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO PROMOTE DRUG FREE RUGBY LEAGUE.

- The key principles of the RFL 100% ME Anti-Doping Policy are to:
  - Uphold and preserve the ethics of Rugby League
  - Safeguard the mental and physical health of players.
  - Ensure that all players have the opportunity to compete equally.
- We acknowledge that so called performance enhancing substances and social substances carry health risks, and we will endeavour to inform our players of the associated risks.
- We acknowledge that all Rugby League players have to abide by the Operational Rules, and as such may be tested by UK Sport. We also acknowledge that doping is an offence and may be punishable by a suspension of up to 2 years for a first offence.
- The Rugby League Club will ensure all of our players are aware of this policy and the endorsement that the club has given.
- The Rugby League Club supports the RFL's Anti-Doping Whistle Blowing Policy. This club will report any allegations of anti-doping to the RFL.
- Further advice on Anti-Doping matters can be obtained from:
 

UK Spor	<a href="http://www.uk sport.gov.uk">www.uk sport.gov.uk</a>
100% ME	<a href="http://www.100percentme.co.uk">www.100percentme.co.uk</a>
Talk to Frank	0800 77 66 00 <a href="http://www.talktofrank.com">www.talktofrank.com</a>

The RFL Anti-Doping Team can be contacted on 0844 477 7113 Option 6 or by emailing to [anti.doping@rfl.uk.com](mailto:anti.doping@rfl.uk.com) or writing to the Anti-Doping team at the RFL, Red Hall, Red Hall Lane, Leeds, LS17 8NB. General advice is available at [www.rfl.uk.com](http://www.rfl.uk.com)

Signed on behalf of the Club by Chairperson	
Print Name	Date

## RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Club Name

### THE CLUB ACKNOWLEDGES ITS RESPONSIBILITY IN LINE WITH THE RFL'S ANTI BULLYING POLICY.

- This club is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate in Rugby League in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.
- Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club.
- If bullying does occur, all club members, parents, volunteers and coaches should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.
- We are a TELLING club.
- This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Club Welfare Officer or any committee member.

Signed on behalf of the Club by Chairperson	
Print Name	Date

## RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Club Name

The club affirms its commitment to the equal treatment of all and will not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of age, ethnic origin, gender, gender reassignment, disability including, physical impairment, learning needs, mental health status or sensory impairment, class or social background, religion/belief, sexual orientation, marital or family status, pregnancy, colour or political persuasion or trade union membership or by any other condition or requirement which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

### 1 The key principles of the RFL Equal Opportunities Policy are:

- A commitment to the principles of equal opportunities and to ensuring that the culture, philosophy and processes within the club and the Game are free from bias and discrimination
- To recognise the expertise, abilities and needs of every individual and by acknowledging the right to dignity and respect of every human being.

2 The RFL will provide information and updates in relation to any changes in legislation or policy changes by the governing body that could impact on the policies and practices of the club. This club agrees to implement such policies

3 This Club will ensure all players, match officials, coaches, staff, paid or volunteers are aware of this policy and the endorsement that the club has given.

4 This Club supports the RFL's Equal Opportunities policy. This club will take appropriate actions following reports of discrimination, harassment or abusive language throughout the game.

### 5 Further advice on Equality and Diversity can be obtained from:

- CEHR [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)
- Equality Standard Bulletins [www.brassingtonweb2.co.uk](http://www.brassingtonweb2.co.uk)

The RFL Equality and Diversity Manager can be contacted on 0844 477 7113 Option 6 or by emailing to [sarah.williams@rfl.uk.com](mailto:sarah.williams@rfl.uk.com) or writing to the Equality and Diversity Manager the RFL, Red Hall, Red Hall Lane, Leeds, LS17 8NB. General advice is available at [www.rfl.uk.com](http://www.rfl.uk.com)

Signed on behalf of the Club by Chairperson	
Print Name	Date

# RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB TACKLE IT! POLICY

Club Name

**THE CLUB ACKNOWLEDGES ITS RESPONSIBILITY IN LINE WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF TACKLE IT!**

**ZERO TACKLE - ZERO TOLERANCE**

- The Club has a policy of ZERO TOLERANCE of racism in any form

**FIRST TACKLE - POLICIES**

- The Club has made a commitment to ensuring that players, spectators, staff and volunteers can enjoy an environment free of discrimination and racism and has the written policies, regulations and conditions in place to support this commitment.

**SECOND TACKLE - COMMUNICATION**

- The Club has nominated a senior member of staff or Officer to take a lead on its policies on racial equality and has communicated and published its policies, ground regulations and other documents which support the Club's commitment.

This person is

- The club also commits to using all available means within its ground to communicate its anti racism stance including programme & scoreboard notices and PA announcements.

**THIRD TACKLE - PREVENTION**

- The Club undertakes to prevent spectators who take part in racist chanting, abuse or harassment from attending matches at their grounds and will ensure that any spectator who takes part in racist chanting, abuse or harassment is ejected from the ground - where an individual cannot be identified warnings should be issued with the ultimate sanction that the game be abandoned.
- The club also commits to take specific action in line with the club's policy against players, officials or spectators who engage in racist chanting or abuse or harassment

**FOURTH TACKLE - EDUCATION & PROCEDURES**

- The Club will adopt the RFL Equity Statement and ensure that Equality and Diversity training and education is delivered to all relevant staff.

**FIFTH TACKLE - PARTNERSHIP & DIVERSITY**

- The Club will undertake to co-operate to their best endeavours to develop partnerships with BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) community leaders, groups, agencies, and media outlets as they seek to promote awareness of ethnicity and associated inclusion issues and to combat racism and to ensure that development strategies reflect the need to encourage diverse involvement in Rugby League across all communities including black and minority ethnic communities

**SIXTH TACKLE - THE OUTCOME**

- The Club is committed to ensuring Rugby League is a truly inclusive, uncompromising, family game.

Signed on behalf of the Club by Chairperson	
<input type="text"/>	
Print Name	Date
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

# RUGBY LEAGUE SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT REFERRAL FORM

IF A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER OR NEEDS URGENT MEDICAL TREATMENT PHONE 999

Club or Rugby League Agency

Your name

Your position

Telephone No.(s)

Child's name

Child's address

Child's date of birth

Child's disability (if any)

**CHILD'S ETHNIC ORIGIN**

- WHITE  British  Irish
- DUAL HERITAGE White & Black Caribbean  White & Asian   
White & Black African
- ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH Indian  Pakistani   
Bangladeshi
- BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH Caribbean  African
- CHINESE
- Other

Parent's name & address

Telephone No.

Date and time of any incident

Your observations

Exactly what the child said and what you said (Remember, do not lead the child, only ask questions to clarify information or your understanding of what has been said - record actual details.) Continue on separate sheet if necessary



Action taken so far

**EXTERNAL AGENCIES CONTACTED (DATE & TIME)**

Police	YES	NO	If YES which force?
--------	-----	----	---------------------

Name and contact number	
-------------------------	--

Details of advice received

Social Services	YES	NO	If YES which area?
-----------------	-----	----	--------------------

Name and contact number	
-------------------------	--

Details of advice received

RFL	YES	NO
-----	-----	----

Name and contact number	
-------------------------	--

Details of advice received

Local Authority	YES	NO	If YES which area?
-----------------	-----	----	--------------------

Name and contact number	
-------------------------	--

Details of advice received

Other (e.g. NSPCC)	YES	NO	If YES which area?
--------------------	-----	----	--------------------

Name and contact number	
-------------------------	--

Details of advice received

**ALL OF THE ABOVE FACTS ARE A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE INCIDENT.**

Signed by person completing the form	
Print Name	Date

This form should be retained by the Club and submitted to the RFL on request.

Remember to maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only if it will protect the child. Do not discuss this incident with anyone other than those who need to know.

N.B. A copy of this form should be sent to the Rugby League Safeguarding Officer, RFL, Red Hall, Red Hall Lane, Leeds LS17 8NB

**IF A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER OR NEEDS URGENT MEDICAL TREATMENT PHONE 999**

## RFL SELF-DISCLOSURE FORM

To be completed by all individuals in Rugby League prior to completing a Rugby League Coaching Course. This form should also be used by clubs in the recruitment of all volunteers.

Please note, this form is not a CRB application. All coaches and volunteers will be asked to complete an enhanced CRB application before taking up their role.

You have the right of access to information held on you and other rights under the Data Protection Act 1984

### PART A

Surname and title (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss)	
Any first name, surname or maiden name previously known by	
First name(s)	
Present address	
Postcode	
Telephone No.(s)	
E-mail address	
Date of Birth	NI No.
Gender	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>

Current Club(s) (Refers to Rugby League or other sports club)	
Position(s) Held	
Start Date	
Coach Qualification & ID No.	
Course Date	
Details of Other Qualifications Held	

Previous Club(s) (Refers to Rugby League or other sports club)	
Start Date	Finish Date
Position(s) Held	
Reason for leaving	

I confirm that I have seen identification documents relating to this person, and I confirm to the best of my ability that these are accurate.

Please detail which documents	
Signature of Club Secretary or Club Welfare Officer	
Print Name	Date

### PART B

Self Disclosure (for completion by the individual named in Part A)

Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offences?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, please supply details of any criminal convictions		

NOTE: You are advised under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exceptions) order 1975 as amended by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Amendment) Order 1986 you should declare all convictions including 'spent' convictions.

Furthermore, having a criminal record does not necessarily prevent you from being involved in Rugby league. Please see the RFL's Rehabilitation of Ex-Offenders policy for further details.

Have you had a disciplinary sanction (from a sports or other organisations governing body) relating to child abuse or poor practice?	
YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, please supply details	

**IMPORTANT**

I hereby consent to the RFL undertaking Police and/or Children’s Social Care (formerly Social Services) checks regarding any previous convictions, investigations or concerns.

I understand that the information contained on this form, the results of Police and Children’s Social Care (formerly Social Services) checks and information supplied by third parties, will be included on RFL’s Safeguarding Nominal Index, may be notified to my club and may be supplied by the RFL to other persons or organisations who have an interest in Safeguarding issues.

The RFL complies fully with it’s obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of sensitive information

The underlying principle to be considered in any decision made regarding self disclosures or related information, is that the welfare of the child is paramount.

I agree to abide by the Rugby League Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Policy.

Signed by the above named individual	
Print Name	Date

This form (Part A and Part B) should be returned DIRECT to:  
Rugby League Safeguarding Officer, Operations, Red Hall, Red Hall Lane, Leeds, LS17 8NB

However, if this form is for a coaching qualification, please return it DIRECT to:  
The Coaching Department, RFL, Red Hall, Red Hall Lane, Leeds, LS17 8NB

**ACCIDENT REPORT FORM**

Club Name

1 Site where incident/accident took place

2 Name of person in charge of session/competition

3 Telephone number of person in charge of session/competition

4 Name of injured person

5 Address of injured person

6 Telephone number of injured person

7 Date and time of incident/accident

8 Nature of incident/accident

9 Give details of how and precisely where the incident/accident took place. Describe what activity was taking place, eg training game, getting changed, etc

10 Give full details of the action taken including any first aid treatment and the name(s) of the first aider(s)

11 What happened to the injured person following the incident/accident? (eg went home, went to hospital, carried on with session)

12 All of the above facts are a true and accurate record of the incident/accident.

Signed by person completing the form	
Print Name	Date
Telephone No. of person completing the form	
Position	

This form should be retained by the Club and submitted to the RFL on request.

If a player suffers a serious injury at a game or training session that this should be reported to the RFL - the following are viewed as "serious injuries":

- Broken neck or spine
- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Incident in which a player stops breathing
- Incident in which a player loses consciousness for a period of more than 5 minutes
- Head injuries leading to surgery or a stay of more than 48 hours in hospital
- Any other injury which is life threatening

The injury should be reported by contacting the RFL as soon as possible after the match. In the most severe of cases contact should be made immediately on the emergency number below

- 07850 483736 or 0844 477 7113 option 6 during office hours or by email to [safeguarding@rfl.uk.com](mailto:safeguarding@rfl.uk.com)

**THE RFL WILL:**

- Inform the Benevolent Fund Serious Injuries Officer, Dave Phillips, who will make contact with the Player's family to see if there is any immediate support or practical assistance that the RFL or the RFL Benevolent Fund can offer
- Inform the RFL insurance brokers of the incident
- Deal with any requests for information from the media

## NOTES



NOTES

NOTES

**RUGBY LEAGUE. It's a whole different ballgame<sup>®</sup>**