



Ellingham and  
Ringwood RFC

# Safeguarding Policy

## Introduction

Ellingham and Ringwood RFC acknowledges its responsibilities to safeguard the interests of all children, young adults and vulnerable adults involved in rugby at the club.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the RFU Safeguarding Policy and Guidance Procedures located at

[http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Safeguarding/01/30/34/50/rfuSafeguardingPolicy2014\\_Neutral.pdf](http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Safeguarding/01/30/34/50/rfuSafeguardingPolicy2014_Neutral.pdf)

And with the following Ellingham and Ringwood RFC Policies

- Changing Room Protocol (Included in this policy)
- Photographic Policy (A separate club wide policy)
- Social Media Policy (A separate club wide policy)
- Codes of Conduct (A separate club wide policy)
- Touring Policy (A separate club wide policy)

These additional policies are all located on the club's website and policy highlight are displayed at the club.

## Approval

This policy was approved by the club's committee in August 2015.

## Aims and objectives

The aims of the Ellingham and Ringwood RFC Safeguarding Policy are:

- To provide a safe and enjoyable environment for children and vulnerable adults to play rugby.
- To provide training in Safeguarding procedures as laid down by the RFU guidelines, that will ensure that adults involved in the game have the knowledge and disciplines to meet the needs of the children and young people who participate in rugby.
- To promote and achieve the highest ethics and standards throughout the club.

## Relevant definitions

**Children, young adults & vulnerable adults** - Children are defined in the Children Act 1989 as people under the age of 18 years.

For the purposes of this policy the legal definition applies.

A vulnerable adult will be afforded the same protection and measures as a child.

**Volunteer** - For the purpose of this policy volunteers will include all coaches, team managers, first aiders, relevant Mini and Junior Committee members and any other role that regularly (defined as

1 hour per month) that interacts with children.

**Club Official** – Any person elected as an officer of the club at the AGM or whose details are published on the club's website in the Club Officials section.

## **The key principles underpinning this policy**

- The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult (as appropriate) is, and must always be, paramount to any other considerations.
- All participants regardless of age, gender, ability or disability, race, faith, culture, size, shape, language or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse or harm and should be able to enjoy their rugby in a positive, safe and enjoyable environment.
- All allegations or suspicions of abuse, neglect, harm, discrimination and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately.
- Children have a right to expect support, and personal and social development delivered by an appropriately recruited and vetted adult.

## **Types of abuse**

There are four main types of abuse: physical, sexual, emotional

and neglect. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly or may be responsible for abuse by failing to prevent another person harming that child.

### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Examples of physical abuse in sport include extreme physical punishments; forcing a child into training and competition that exceeds the capacity of his or her immature and growing body or limitations of a disability; assaulting a person; or where the child is given drugs to enhance performance or in the case of a child, delay puberty.

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing a child to take part in sexual activities, which may involve inappropriate touching, penetrative or non-penetrative sexual acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual photographic or online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their development. It may involve conveying to children 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. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing them from participating in normal social interaction.

Emotional abuse may involve a child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another as well as serious bullying, causing children to 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, though it may also occur alone.

Examples of emotional abuse in sport include subjecting children to constant criticism, name-calling, and sarcasm or bullying. It could also include their regular exclusion from an activity, non-selection for a team, failing to rotate squad positions or more subtle actions such as staring at or ignoring a child. Putting players under consistent pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards is also a form of emotional abuse.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. Neglect may involve a parent failing to provide adequate food,

clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment), failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, or to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers) or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. Examples of neglect in sport could include: not ensuring children are safe; exposing them to undue cold or heat or unsuitable weather conditions, or exposing them to unnecessary risk of injury.

### **Bullying**

Bullying is often considered to be a fifth type of abuse but when it does occur it usually has elements of one or more of the four categories identified. The bully can be a parent who pushes too hard, a coach or manager with a 'win at all costs' attitude or another intimidating child. It should also be recognised that bullying can take place in the virtual world of social networking sites, emails or text messages.

Bullying should not be ignored and the victim should be supported through what can be a traumatic experience. Bullying will not just go away. Bullies can be very cunning and develop strategies to avoid it being seen by anyone but the victim.

Bullying takes many forms but ultimately it is the perception of the victim that determines whether or

not they are being bullied rather than the intention of the bully.

There are opportunities to bully at any rugby club or activity. It is the way that incidences are dealt with which makes the difference between life being tolerable or becoming a misery for the victim.

## **Promoting good practice with children and young people**

All volunteers will be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect the best interests of children and protect themselves from a false allegation.

They should

- Demonstrate and uphold Rugby's Core Values of Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship.
- Put the welfare of each child first in all circumstances without exception.
- Always work in an open environment and avoid private or unobserved situations.
- Treat children equally, with respect and dignity.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with players.
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share

in the decision making process.

- Promote fair play.
- Ensure that all coaching given is provided according to guidelines.
- Keep up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance in the sport.
- Involve parents/guardians wherever possible.
- Ensure all relevant tour policies and procedures are completed and adhered to and ensure that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children or young people to their rooms.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Avoid excessive training.
- Request written parental consent if required to transport children in their cars. If at all possible children should travel with their own parents and a situation where a volunteer is alone in a car with a child should be avoided except in an absolute emergency.
- Discuss any concerns promptly with the club's Safeguarding Officer.

## **Practices to be avoided**

The following should be avoided except in absolute emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable they should occur with the full knowledge and approval of the Mini or Junior

Chairman, the Safeguarding Officer and the child's parent/guardians.

All club volunteers should

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children or young people away from other adults.
- Avoid taking children or young people to their homes where they will be alone with the child.
- Avoid communicating directly with children via text, social media, email or phone.
- Avoid entering or sharing changing rooms with players when they are changing.

## **Practices never to occur**

The following are not acceptable and will be treated seriously by the club and may result in disciplinary action being taken by the club, the HRFU or the RFU:

- Working alone with a child, children, vulnerable adult, or adults.
- Consuming alcohol or drugs whilst responsible for children or vulnerable adults.
- Providing alcohol to children or allowing its supply.
- Smoking in the presence of children whilst coaching.
- Humiliating children or vulnerable adults.
- Inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a child or vulnerable adult.

- Participating in, or allowing, contact or physical games with children or vulnerable adults.
- Having an intimate or sexual relationship with any child or vulnerable adult developed as a result of being in a 'position of trust.'
- Making sexually explicit comments or sharing sexually explicit material.

If any of the following occur it will be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Officer and the child's parents or guardian will be informed.

- A child is accidentally hurt by a volunteer.
- A child seems distressed in any way.
- A child seems unusually interested in a volunteer (or vice versa).
- A child misunderstands or misinterprets an action.

## **Changing room and Shower protocol**

Adults and children must never use the same facilities to shower or change at the same time.

Adults must only enter changing rooms when absolutely necessary due to poor behaviour, injury or illness.

Adults must only ever enter the changing rooms by themselves in an emergency and when waiting for another adult could result in harm to a child. If children or vulnerable adults need supervising in changing rooms, or coaches or

managers need to carry out a range of tasks in that environment this must involve two suitably vetted adults of the same gender as the children or vulnerable adults.

For mixed gender activities separate facilities should be available. If the same facilities must be used by adults and children or vulnerable adults on the same day a clear timetable should be established. No pressure should be placed on children or vulnerable adults who feel uncomfortable changing or showering with others, if this is the case they should be allowed to shower and change at home.

Where a disability requires significant support from a parent; or carer, the person concerned and their parents should decide how they should be assisted to change or shower. Before any assistance is offered by another person, appropriate consent should be given by a parent.

## **Recruitment and selection of coaches and volunteers**

Ellingham and Ringwood RFC recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children and young people and will endeavour to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and young people.

- All volunteers/coaching staff will complete and maintain an RFU approved DBS check.
- An up to date Children's Workforce List with the names and vetting status of all volunteers who work with children will be kept.
- No new volunteer will be allowed to be alone with children until their DBS check is approved and will at all time be supervised by a volunteer that has an valid DBS check.

## **Responding to suspicions or allegations**

Ellingham and Ringwood RFC will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his/her concerns concerning Safeguarding. Any such concerns can be made to the Safeguarding Officer or any of the officials listed on the Club's website.

Any suspicions that a child has been abused should be immediately reported to the Safeguarding Officer, who will take such steps as necessary as to ensure the safety of the child.

If the Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the allegation, a report can be made to any Club Official.

The following actions will be taken upon notification:

- The incident will be logged and a Safeguarding Incident form will be created by the Safeguarding Officer.
- The incident will be assessed.
- The parent/guardian of the child will be informed as soon as possible following advice from relevant statutory Welfare agencies.
- As appropriate, officials from the club, statutory Welfare agencies, the Police and HRFU will be notified.
- The incident will be investigated and statements taken.
- Relevant Welfare agencies and The Police.
- The RFU and Hampshire RFU Safeguarding Manager.
- The alleged abuser and parents if it is a child.

## **Action if bullying is suspected**

Ellingham and Ringwood RFC volunteers will

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Report concerns to the Safeguarding Officer.
- Inform all parents/guardians.
- Encourage all children and young people to speak and share their concerns with someone in authority.
- Investigate all allegations and take actions to ensure victims are safe.
- Speak with the alleged victim and bullies separately.
- Reassure the alleged victim that they will be helped.
- Document what is said.
- Talk with the alleged bully/ies and aim to get them to understand the consequences of their actions.
- Seek an apology and/or other remedial action once proven.
- Document all information.

## **Poor Practices**

If following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the club Safeguarding Officer and Disciplinary Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

## **Confidentiality**

Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information will be handed and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This may include the following people.

- The Safeguarding Officer.
- Relevant Club Officials.
- The parents/guardians of the child alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation.

## **Use of video, film or photography at matches and training sessions.**

Along with adherence to our **Photography policy**, it is a requirement that any person wishing to engage in photography, filming or videoing at any match, training session or event connected with Ellingham and Ringwood RFC gain permission before the event from the Head Coach or other Club Official.

For tournaments such consent may be given on the entry form.

## **Social media and safeguarding**

The use of social media sites is governed by the club's **Social Media Policy**.

## **Touring with Children**

The policies and procedures for Touring with Children are governed by the club's **Tour Policy**.

## **Codes of Conduct**

The policies relating to conduct are contained within the club's **Codes of Conduct Policy**.

## **Playing out of age grade**

Playing out of a child's age grade presents additional considerations from a safeguarding perspective. Ellingham and Ringwood RFC acknowledges Regulation 15 – Age Grade Rugby requirements. And all coaches should become familiar with Regulation 15 and the

supporting best practice guidance from the RFU.

[http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Regulations/01/30/35/01/Guidance\\_to\\_age\\_grade\\_regulation\\_15\\_Neutral.pdf](http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Regulations/01/30/35/01/Guidance_to_age_grade_regulation_15_Neutral.pdf)

All coaches are responsible for making sure that the correct processes, assessments and approvals are carried out according to the requirements of the RFU. Specifically this will require the completion, relevant assessments and approvals of the RFU Playing out of Age Grade Consent Form located at.

[http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Regulations/01/30/46/68/Consent\\_form\\_for\\_non\\_EAPs\\_playing\\_out\\_of\\_age\\_grade\\_Neutral.doc](http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Regulations/01/30/46/68/Consent_form_for_non_EAPs_playing_out_of_age_grade_Neutral.doc)

The decision to allow a 17 year old to play adult rugby in accordance with RFU Regulation 15.3.7 lies with the person in the best position to assess all the relevant circumstances.

In all such cases the following form must be completed and kept as a record of consent.

[http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Regulations/01/30/46/70/Playing\\_adult\\_rugby\\_form\\_Neutral.doc](http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/Regulations/01/30/46/70/Playing_adult_rugby_form_Neutral.doc)