

# **Witham Rugby Union Football Club**

## **Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy**

Updated January 2024

1) Witham Rugby Union Football Club acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults involved in Witham Rugby Union Club from harm.

2) Witham RUFC confirms that it adheres to the Rugby Football Union's (RFU) Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, practices and guidelines and endorses and adopts the Policy Statement contained in that document.

3) A child is anyone under the age of 18 engaged in any rugby union activity. However, where a 17-year-old male player is playing in the adult game it is essential that every reasonable precaution is taken to ensure their safety and well-being are protected.

4) Key Principles of the RFU Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adult Policy are:

- The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult 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, sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse or harm.
- All allegations or suspicions of abuse, neglect, harm and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately.
- Working in partnership with other organizations, statutory agencies, parents, carers, children and young people is essential for the welfare of children and young people.
- Children have the right to expect support and personal and social development delivered by an appropriately recruited, vetted and managed in relation to their participation in rugby union, whether they are playing, volunteering or officiating in the community or professional areas of the sport.

5) Witham RUFC recognises that all children, irrespective of age, gender, ability, race, religion, ethnic origin, colour, nationality or sexual orientation, have the right to participate in sport in a safe, positive and enjoyable environment whilst at the same time being protected from abuse, neglect and harm or poor practice.

Witham RUFC recognises that this is the responsibility of everyone involved in whatever capacity at the club.

6) Witham RUFC will implement and comply with the RFU Code of Conduct and the Codes of Conduct for Coaches, Spectators and Officials as appropriate. Witham RUFC will ensure its spectators, parents, members and officials are all aware of and have accepted the club photographic Policy as set out in the club welcome pack and on the website.

**7)** Witham RUFC will comply with the RFU cyber guidance principles. As an RFU affiliated club Witham RUFC are legally and morally responsible for the content of its website. Witham RUFC undertakes to ensure that there is nothing on its website which could harm a child directly or indirectly.

#### Websites:

There are two key areas:

- a) Abusive or inappropriate content (photos, videos or texts), on the club website or linked sites, this includes adverts, especially from Google or other sponsored links.
- b) The disclosing of personal information about a child to people accessing the website. This could be the child's full name, address or any information about a child's life.

#### Photos and video:

Witham RUFC undertake to maintain control and avoid misuse of any photographic images. Care should be taken when considering how a photo/video could be used or misused. The issue of control and release into the public domain of any image must be considered before release.

#### Mobile and online communication with children:

Witham RUFC undertake to follow the recommendations of the cyber guidance section of the RFU Safeguarding Toolkit. It is recommended that:

- a) When communicating by phone, where possible club officials and coaches should speak to a parent of the child.
- b) Club officials and coaches should not communicate with individual children by text or online at any time on any matter unless there is an immediate risk to the welfare of the child which can be lessened by such contact.
- c) If club officials or coaches need to communicate club related information to children by email (such as training or match details) they will use email groups comprising email addresses given by parents, all bulk emails should be BCC or sent in such a way that members email addresses are not made public or generally distributed. If replying to an email directly from a child, the parent should be copied in to the response.
- d) Coaches and club officials should not communicate with children through social networking sites such as facebook. Coaches should not be 'friends' with the children they coach and they should not comment on their status.

In all cases the above guidelines should be considered when determining the most appropriate method of communication in any given circumstance.

Also refer to Witham RUFC separate Social Media Policy.

**8)** Witham RUFC aims to create a safe and secure environment. Bullying is deliberately hurtful behavior which results in the victim feeling distressed. Bullying occurs when this behavior is exercised through the use of power rather than an exchange between equals. Bullying will not be tolerated at Witham RUFC. Reports or

accusations of bullying will be taken seriously, responded to promptly and procedures that are deemed required will be put in place to deal with the situation.

**9) The Club Safeguarding Officers are: Rebecca Cook & Asst Hayley Ellen**

If you are witness or are aware of an incident where the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult has been put at risk you must in the first instance inform a Club Safeguarding Officer. They will inform the CB (Essex) Safeguarding Manager and the RFU Safeguarding Executive. If the incident involves a Safeguarding Officer you should inform the Youth Chairperson Kelly Davis and either the CB Safeguarding Manager or the RFU Safeguarding Executive.

**10)** All members of Witham RUFC whose role complies to the RFU DBS eligibility criteria must undertake an RFU Enhanced DBS disclosure. There are no exemptions, this is independent of any current DBS checks or certificates that person may hold with any other body or organisation. Witham RUFC will follow RFU guidelines regarding Volunteer Recruitment. Completion of a Volunteer Recruitment form will be part of the application process.

**11)** Witham RUFC will ensure that all its members, whether they are coaches, parents, players or officials will comply with the best Practice Guidelines as issued by the RFU. In summary, 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 CB or the RFU.

- Working alone with a child, children, Vulnerable adult or adults.
- Consuming Alcohol whilst responsible for children or vulnerable adults.
- Providing alcohol to children or allowing its supply.
- Smoking in the presence of children
- 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.
- Making sexually explicit comments or sharing sexually explicit material.
- Having an intimate or sexual relationship with any child; or vulnerable adult developed as a result of being in a "position of trust".

**12)** Witham RUFC manages the changing facilities and arranges for them to be supervised by two adults (RFU DBS checked) of the appropriate gender for the players using the facilities.

Witham RUFC ensures that all of its coaches, parents, officials and spectators are aware that adults must not change and shower at the same time, using the same facilities as children or vulnerable adults.



The following instructions must be adhered to by Witham RUFC members and any third party that book the club's facilities: -

If children (under 18 years of age) need supervising in changing rooms and shower area, or coaches or managers need to carry out a range of tasks in that environment only authorised adults i.e. coaches, manager etc. who have a valid RFU DBS and are responsible for that age group are allowed to supervise the children in the changing rooms and shower area and must be of the same gender as the children.

For mixed gender activities, separate facilities should be made available.

An adult and child (under 18 years of age) should never be alone in the changing or shower areas unless in an emergency or an accident has occurred where imminent serious harm to that child could result and waiting for another adult could increase the seriousness of the injury.

13) Witham RUFC will ensure that its coaches and team managers will receive the support and training considered appropriate to their position and role. The RFU "Managing Challenging Behaviour" Policy has been adopted and circulated amongst the club workforce, both voluntary and paid.

14) Any events held on Witham RUFC premises must comply with this Policy and if appropriate a Safeguarding Plan should be discussed and circulated to those affected.

15) Touring. Any tours, overseas or domestic undertaken by Witham RUFC must comply with the relevant RFU Regulations and Guidance relating to those activities. Witham RUFC acknowledges its responsibility regarding the safeguarding and welfare of all children regarding club organised tours. Witham RUFC has a club policy regarding Youth/Mini Tours in a separate document.

All members must be mindful that all Safeguarding policies and protocols apply during touring. All tour managers must be fully aware of their responsibilities which are clearly set out in the RFU document 'Touring with Children Guidance.'

This Safeguarding Policy has been updated January 2024 and is adopted in accordance with the club constitution.

Signed [Signature]..... Position Safeguarding Officer

Date 11/01/2024.....