



## **HERTFORD RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB**

### **SAFEGUARDING**

### **POLICY**

Last Reviewed: November 2023



## **Policy**

1. Hertford RFC acknowledges its' responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Hertford RFC from harm. Hertford RFC confirms that it adheres to the Rugby Football Union's Safeguarding Policy. This policy should be read in conjunction with that Policy and does not replace nor supersede it.
2. A child or young person is anyone under the age of 18 engaged in any rugby union activity. Where a 17 year old player is playing in the adult game every reasonable precaution will be taken to ensure their safety and wellbeing are also protected.
3. The Key Principles of the RFU Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy are that:
  - a. The welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult is, and must always be, paramount to any other consideration
  - b. 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
  - c. All allegations or suspicions of abuse, neglect, harm and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately
  - d. Working in partnership with other organisations, statutory agencies, parents, carers, children and young people is essential for the welfare of children and young people
4. Hertford RFC recognises that all children and young people have the right to participate in sport in a safe, positive and enjoyable environment whilst at the same time being protected from abuse, neglect, harm and poor practice. Hertford RFC recognises that this is the responsibility of everyone involved, in whatever capacity, at the club.

## **Code of Conduct**

5. Hertford RFC follows the RFU Code of for all users and visitors to the Club. This Policy is at Appendix A.

## **Websites, Online and Mobile Communications**

6. Hertford RFC follows the RFU Guidance for Websites, Online and Mobile Communications as set out on the RFU website. RFU Guidelines are attached in Appendix B.

## **Photographic Policy**

7. Hertford RFC Photographic Policy is published on the club website and in Appendix C. Hertford RFC follows the RFU Photographic Policy recommendations and Best Practice guidelines.

## **Incident Reporting**

8. The Club Safeguarding Officer and Assistant Safeguarding Officers are published on Club Noticeboards, in the Club Yearbook and in the Contacts and Safeguarding sections of the Club Website. Anyone witnessing or aware of an incident where the welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult has been put at risk must in the first instance inform the Club Safeguarding Officer or an Assistant Safeguarding Officer. If an incident involves the Club Safeguarding Officer the Club Chairman should be informed and also either the Herts RFU Safeguarding Manager or the RFU Safeguarding Executive. The chart in Appendix E provides guidance on who to contact and in what circumstances.



## **DBS Checks**

9. All members of Hertford RFC who have a regular supervisory contact with children or a management responsibility for those working with children must undertake an RFU Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. An RFU flowchart to determine who requires a DBS check is reproduced in Appendix D.

## **Safeguarding Best Practice**

10. Hertford RFC will ensure that all coaches, volunteers, and officials comply with the Safeguarding Best Practice Guidance 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, Herts RFU or the RFU:
- a. Working alone with a children or young people
  - b. Consuming alcohol or smoking whilst working with children or young people
  - c. Failing to comply with the Club's guidelines on phone, email, messaging, internet and online contact with children or young people given in APPENDIX B
  - d. Providing alcohol to children or young people or allowing its supply
  - e. Humiliating children or young people
  - f. Inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult
  - g. Participating in, or allowing, contact or physical games between adults and children or young people
  - h. Having an intimate or sexual relationship with any child, young person or vulnerable adult developed as a result of being in a "position of trust"
  - i. Making sexually explicit comments or sharing sexually explicit material.

## **Changing Facilities**

11. Hertford RFC ensures all its' coaches, parents, officials and spectators are aware that adults must not use the changing facilities at the same time as children, young people or vulnerable adults.
12. 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 need supervising in changing rooms, or coaches or managers need to carry out a range of tasks in that environment this must involve two DBS checked individuals of the same gender as the children
13. No pressure should be placed on young people who feel uncomfortable changing or showering with others, if this is the case they should be allowed to shower or change at home.

## **Safeguarding Training**

14. Hertford RFC will provide its coaches and volunteers with the support and safeguarding training required for their position and role. Coaches and Volunteers must ensure they attend this training.

## **Events**

15. Any events held on Hertford RFC premises must comply with this Policy and if appropriate a Safeguarding Plan specific to that event should be discussed and circulated to those affected.



## **Tours**

16. Any tours, overseas or domestic, undertaken by Hertford RFC must comply with the relevant RFU Regulations and Guidance relating to tours. All Tours must be notified to the RFU in advance and all overseas tours require RFU approval in advance. Tour organisers should contact the Club Safeguarding Officer in the first instance.

## **Bullying**

17. Hertford RFC follows the RFU's Anti-Bullying policy. This can be viewed on the RFU website at [www.rfu.com](http://www.rfu.com).

## **Policy Implementation**

18. The welfare of children at Hertford RFC will only be protected properly if this policy is implemented effectively.
19. Hertford RFC have designated individuals with child protection responsibility. Their names and contact details are on the club's website and on display in the clubhouse.



## **APPENDIX A: RFU CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

At Hertford RFC we operate in line with the core values:

Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship.

We are committed to developing a culture that lives and breathes the core values, is free of abuse, discrimination and harm, and where everyone feels safe and able to raise any concerns they have.

We are committed to developing an inclusive culture where it is safe and acceptable for everyone involved in rugby to raise concerns about any unacceptable practice, behaviour, wrongdoing or misconduct.

This Code of Conduct and our policies and procedures, and the terms and conditions of any volunteer or employment agreement with the club, provide a framework in which clubs and participants can be empowered to create safe, respectful and enjoyable environments.

Everyone who is involved in rugby, whether as a player, coach, parent, spectator, or volunteer, is expected to uphold the Core Values.

### **THE CODE**

This Code has been adopted by Hertford RFC (referred to in this Code as the “club”), to ensure we can operate fairly, appropriately and in the best interests of everyone at the club, including its children and young people. This Code sets out the behavioural standards that members and other participants of the Club must meet.

This Code is a key part of our process for dealing with complaints of poor conduct. It sets the level of expectations when determining any need for formal or informal disciplinary procedures.

### **RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS**

Everyone who participates in activities with the club has the right:

1. To enjoy safe participation in rugby, without fear of abuse or harm
2. To always be treated with respect and dignity
3. Not to be pressured into training, competing, or participating against their will
4. To be treated in line with the Core Values, as well as the expected values of the club
5. Not to be discriminated against based on their age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy or maternity
6. To challenge poor conduct and discrimination, both when witnessed and experienced
7. To make a complaint and/or raise a concern, and for it to be taken seriously and acted upon under this Code of Conduct

### **CONDUCT**

Respectful conduct in rugby is paramount in creating a safe and inclusive culture where children and adults can develop in the sport. Inappropriate behaviour has a detrimental impact on the enjoyment and development of participants, and as such we expect the Core Values to be demonstrated by



everyone.

The conduct described in this Code extends to conduct on the touchline, in and around the Club, and on all online platforms, including messaging and social media platforms. Good conduct on the touchline is expected at the Club from all participants.

To help the participants at the Club understand what is expected of them when they are taking part in rugby activities, we have outlined a list of good conduct, which is encouraged, and poor conduct, which is unacceptable, and contravene the Core Values. This list is not exhaustive, and we would encourage all participants to familiarise themselves with these behaviours.

## **BEHAVIOUR WE ENCOURAGE AT THE CLUB**

Members of the club and any other participants are expected and encouraged to always:

### **Treatment of others**

- Treat others with respect and dignity, including all officials, spectators, coaches and players, whether from the club or the opposition
- Treat each other fairly, and never discriminate, or show preferential treatment towards people, based on their characteristics
- Be magnanimous in victory and gracious in defeat
- Be welcoming to everyone, whether they be children or adults
- Make sure feedback is positive and constructive and avoid negative criticism
- Accept responsibility for their actions and conduct

### **Challenging and reporting**

- Never tolerate abusive, threatening or intimidating behaviour towards yourself or others. All instances of harassment and abusive or threatening behaviour should be challenged and reported to the club. This includes conduct on match days and non-match days.
- Work together to create a positive and welcoming club environment, where people feel confident in reporting and challenging poor conduct, and take responsibility for acting as role models and demonstrating best practice behaviours
- Never tolerate cheating, manipulation of competition, use of prohibited substances or methods, or unsportsmanlike conduct and take responsibility for setting good examples to players regarding these issues
- Encourage a healthy environment, where skill development, enjoyment and teamwork are promoted

### **Working with children and adults at risk**

- Be friendly, professional and positive role models to children and young people.

For example, they should not be smoking/vaping or consuming alcohol when coaching and/or working with children or young people or engaging in any other behaviour that would be considered inappropriate

- Ensure that participants of the club are aware of their responsibilities to safeguard children and young people, and conduct themselves appropriately with other affiliates of the club



- Remember that children and young people get a wide range of benefits from taking part in rugby, and participation should not be centred around winning games but enjoying the sport and developing skills and fitness
- Take ownership in ensuring that they are up to date with all club rules, policies and procedures, and are always in keeping with the values of the club

## **UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR AT THE CLUB**

Members of the club and any other participants must never:

### **Treatment of others**

- Engage in any abusive, threatening or bullying behaviour towards anyone at the club, or allow this behaviour to go unchecked and unreported
- Use inappropriate language towards participants of the club, including, but not limited to; sexually suggestive behaviour/language, unwanted/unnecessary physical contact and language or conduct intending to intimidate or threaten individuals
- Challenge, or encourage others to challenge, the decision of any match official
- Enter the field of play, unless instructed otherwise by the match officials
- Use any form of physical force or punishment towards players, spectators or anyone else
- Engage in any form of behaviour that may bring the club, or the RFU, into disrepute. This includes any form of behaviour that is not in line with the Core Values

### **Challenging and reporting**

- Attempt to silence, intimidate or disregard, anyone who wishes to raise a concern regarding safeguarding, welfare, discipline, cheating or poor conduct

### **Working with children and adults at risk**

- Allow allegations or comments made by a child or adult at risk regarding either safeguarding or welfare concerns to be disregarded or go unrecorded
- Allow children or young people to engage in inappropriate behaviour amongst one another, including but not limited to; bullying behaviour, sexually suggesting behaviour or language, intimidating or violent behaviour or discriminatory behaviour/language
- Allow children to carry out rugby activities unsupervised while at the club
- Use their position or influence to form inappropriate relationships with any child or adult at risk
- Use any type of physical or corporal punishment to discipline a child or adult at risk

## **WHO THE CODE APPLIES TO**

This Code applies to all individuals who participate at the club, referred to throughout the document as “participants” including anyone who:

- holds a role with the club, whether that is paid or unpaid; or
- is responsible for the care and supervision of a child or adult at risk who attends the club; or
- is involved with the club through a social aspect, such as a customer, member or spectator; or



- attends any club activity, whether that be on club premises or not, including spectating home and away matches.

The Code applies to participants whether or not club activity is taking place on club property, including away games and tours.

## **REPORTING AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

- Report any behaviour you see, witness, or experience, that upsets you, or makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, to either the Club Safeguarding Officer, the Club Disciplinary Officer, the club Committee or the RFU
- Any breach of this Code may be dealt with in accordance with the club's own disciplinary process.
- Any conduct which is also a breach of RFU or other Regulations may also be reported to the club's Constituent Body and/or to the RFU.

If you wish to raise any concerns with the RFU, you can also email [speakup@rfu.com](mailto:speakup@rfu.com) or visit the Speak Up page on the RFU website.

## **RELEVANT POLICIES**

For further information about expected behaviours and other processes, this Code should be read in conjunction with the following policies and RFU Regulations:

- RFU Speak Up Policy
- Regulation 17 (Anti-corruption and betting)
- Regulation 19 (Discipline)
- Regulation 20 (Anti-doping)
- Regulation 21 (Safeguarding)
- RFU Safeguarding Children Policy
- RFU Safeguarding Adults Policy
- RFU Safeguarding Complaints Policy





## **APPENDIX B: HERTFORD RFC SAFEGUARDING POLICY RELATING TO CLUB WEBSITES, MOBILE AND ONLINE COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

### **Website and Message Board.**

The Club Website is a key part of the daily operation of the Club. In particular, the Message Board on the website is the primary means of communicating with Parents, Players and Members. They are also a very safe way to communicate with children given their wide accessibility.

However, in the same way that Hertford RFC has responsibility for the physical safety of Mini and Youth members when on the club's premises, Hertford RFC will also ensure that there is nothing on its' website which could harm a child, directly or indirectly. Hertford RFC is responsible for the content of its website. Message Board content, which can be posted by all members, will be moderated by Board moderators to ensure inappropriate content is removed.

Given our Club Website and Message Board are open to the public, there are 2 key risks to guard against when posting information:

1. Disclosing personal information about a child to people accessing the website. This could be the child's name, address, or any information about a child's life, interests or activities which would help a stranger target a child, or engage that child in conversation.
2. Abusive or inappropriate content (photos, video or text), on the site itself. This includes material which criticises or humiliates a child. It could also be information which places undue pressure on the child to participate in some aspect of a clubs' activities.

### **Online Photos and video**

Photos and video clips can make any child featured vulnerable to grooming if information about the child (name, address, activities or interests) is also disclosed. Furthermore, posting an image on a website carries a risk that the image could be taken and adapted for an inappropriate use.

RFU Recommendations:

- Use group images, rather than individual images.
- For images of individual children (such as in action shots) where possible use models or illustrations.
- Only use images of children in suitable dress, to minimise the risk of inappropriate adaptation of the image
- If a child is named on the site, do not include an image (individual or group). If a child features in an image on the site, do not use the child's first name or last name, either in text on the site or in the image file name.
- Hertford RFC will abide by all RFU recommendations regarding photo and video images and will obtain consent from the appropriate responsible person(s) before using any images of children or vulnerable adults on its website. Consent request clauses are included in the registration form which is completed each season and are also held by the club age group administrators.



### **Webcams and Live Image Streams**

Hertford RFC will not use webcams to stream live images of children or vulnerable adults and if use of a webcam to broadcast images of children or vulnerable adults is requested, the Safeguarding Officer at Hertford RFC will contact the RFU for further guidance before permission is granted.

### **Mobile and Online Communication with Children**

Technology is moving very fast in this area. There are now many different ways for people to communicate. In addition to landlines, there are mobile phones for voice and text, and most new phones incorporate cameras that take still shots and video. Two-way video calling is commonplace. On-line communication can be by email, instant messaging and social networking sites.

The risks posed by such methods of communication arise from:

- The privacy. It is often one-to-one
- The wide range of content that can be transmitted, including content of a violent, sexual or hateful nature
- The ease with which images can be forwarded onto others
- The difficulty in knowing truly who you are communicating with. Where grooming happens, it often involves this type of communication.

In sport, there are additional risks:

- Inappropriate pressure can be exerted by adults, particularly coaches, on children (such as to play when injured)
- There can be inappropriate criticism of a young player's performance
- An official position or role within a club, such as Coach, can carry with it a level of authority and engender a level of trust that facilitates the control of a child.

Against this background, Hertford RFC will abide by all RFU guidance with regard to mobile and online communication with children and vulnerable adults and will cascade any information for them to the parents (or carer) of that child or vulnerable adult. Hertford RFC will not directly contact a child or vulnerable adult directly by mobile phone unless prior consent is given by the parent or carer.

Club Guidelines:

- All Age Group communications – for example fixture information, team selection – should be sent via the Club Message Board. Emails can be sent linking to the Message Board as a reminder to parents to check the Message Board. Emails should only be sent using email groups comprising email addresses given by parents. An email should not be sent to a child unless the parent is also copied. Such emails should only come from age group coaches or administrators as communicated to Parents.



#### Other Online (Social Media) Services.

- No Club Member may initiate a social media outlet that is directly linked and intended to be used by Hertford RFC members without the express permission of the Club Executive Committee or, for Mini or Youth matters, the respective Mini or Youth Committees. Administrators of social media outlets must ensure the content complies with the Website and Message Board policy above. Further:
  - Twitter can be used for broadcasting information but must not be used for 1-1 (Direct) Messaging between Adults and Young People. Content must conform to the Website and Message Board policy above
  - Facebook. Communication via Facebook is permitted only via public club Facebook pages where the content is public and conforms to the Website and Message Board policy above. Private, closed groups and 1-1 messaging between Coaches and Young People is not permitted.
  - Other online and social media services whether public or private are not permitted. Requests to add other services to the approved list should be directed to the Club Safeguarding Officer.

#### SMS Messaging (Texting):

- Club Officials and Coaches should only communicate directly with individual children by text at any time, on any matter, if the parent or carer is copied on such communication or there is an immediate risk to the welfare of that child which can be lessened by such contact.
- Telephone: When communication by phone is needed, Club Officials and Coaches can speak to individual young people on phones provided they have prior consent from the child's parents or carer and from the young person if old enough to understand.



## **APPENDIX C: HERTFORD RUGBY CLUB PHOTOGRAPHIC POLICY**

### **Overarching Principles**

Hertford Rugby Club's photography policy derives from the RFU's Policy. The basic principles are:

- **Permission:** Every parent or carer has the option to decline permission for the taking and publication of images/videos of a young person in their care
- **Appropriate Circumstances & Attire:** Photography/video must be undertaken in appropriate circumstances. All young people must be appropriately attired at all times
- **Publication and Identification:** Publication should not be done in such a way that young people are identifiable; images should be published without accompanying sensitive personal details such as a young person's address
- **Focus of the Photography:** The imagery should focus on the activity rather than any particular individual
- **Equity Policy:** Wherever possible, imagery should reflect the diversity of the young people making up The Club's membership
- **Third Party Photography:** Whenever professional photographers or outside media are invited or commissioned, the Club will require identification and safeguarding measures to ensure only the proper use and dissemination of imagery

### **Circumstances of photography/video**

Photographs/videos of junior players are usually taken in the following contexts. This list is not exhaustive.

- Coaching - video may be filmed and used thereafter for coaching purposes
- Action photographs - general photographs of players during a game
- Team photographs - posed group photos of teams
- Awards and ceremonies
- Press coverage - local, national and specialist rugby media photographs/video
- Tours and festivals - at other clubs and grounds which will be subject to the host club's policy permission.

All parents/guardians are asked to indicate on Registration Forms if they do not consent to the taking and use of photographs/videos featuring their children throughout the season. If consent is not withheld, the parent or carer permission continues throughout the season, terminating at its conclusion, unless the parent or carer notifies the squad manager and Club Safeguarding Officer, in writing, of a change of mind.

The result of withholding or withdrawing permission is that the Club reserves the right to require the parent or carer to be present throughout an event where photo/video is expected to be taken and to undertake to supervise and monitor the event for the purpose of safeguarding their child.

### **Focus and content of the imagery**

Images taken by parents, carers, supporters and coaches at the Club's grounds, and at away games, tours and festivals where the host club applies no stricter policy, should comply with the following restrictions:



1. The Club adopts the RFU guidelines on appropriate dress for young players. These recommend that all young people featuring in photographs/videos be appropriately dressed with outer clothing/ garments covering their torso between the bottom of the neck and the thighs i.e. a minimum of a vest/shirt and shorts. For formal photographs players should be properly dressed in Club kit.
2. Wherever possible the Club also undertakes to reflect the RFU Equity Policy. Accordingly photographs/videos should represent the diversity of young people participating in rugby at the Club.
3. Photographs/video should focus on the activity rather than any particular young person. Where possible photography of young people should concentrate on small groups of players.

### **Sensitive Information**

Photographs/videos should not include nor be accompanied by sensitive information which might enable a stranger to identify the players. Such information might include, but is not limited to, an image of the players parent or guardian, the players full name, age, address, email address, telephone number or such personal details of the parent/guardian or the parents/guardians personal details.

### **Publication by the Club of Imagery**

The Club must have general parent or carer permission to use an image of a young person (see above). When such permission has been given, the Club may publish photographs/videos in its own materials or via third party media organisations such as the local press. Such publication of photographs/videos will not include any sensitive information described or identified above of the young people or of their parents or carers.

Where the reason for publication is an individual achievement (i.e. a players selection for a representative side, triumph over adversity), particular attention will be paid to ensuring specific permission is also secured from the young person to use their image.

### **Publication by Others of Imagery**

The Club must have general parent or carer permission to use an image of a young person (see above).

### **Photography/Video by the Media or Third Party**

The Club reserves the right to invite photographers from the local media or rugby specialist press to record the Clubs events. If it does so it undertakes that it will

1. Require any such photographers to register upon arrival at a Club event; to carry with them, at all times, bona fide and appropriate identification which must be produced on request and to abide by the overarching principles set out above
2. inform parents and participants that one or more media photographers will be present and
3. not approve/allow unsupervised access to the players, one-to-one photography sessions with players, nor photo sessions outside the event or at any players home.

### **Use of photographic/video equipment by parents/guardians and adult supporters**

Parents and carers are advised that if they have concerns about inappropriate or intrusive photography/filming these should be reported to the squad manager, to an event organiser or to an official so that these may be recorded and dealt with in the same manner as any other child protection concern.



If parents or carers or adult supporters wish to take images of a game, session, or event at a Club ground, they must ascertain whether any member of the squad has had permission withheld for photography; at any other ground they must also be prepared to comply with the policy of the host club.

In addition, wherever the Club's young players are playing photographers may be required to identify themselves and state their purpose for photography/videoing an event. They must, if advised that any visiting or host clubs young player withholds permission for photography, cease doing so immediately unless able to come to an arrangement with that players parent or guardian.

The Club reserves the right to contact authorities in the event that any individual refuses to stop taking photographs/video or refuses to identify themselves upon challenge by the Club.

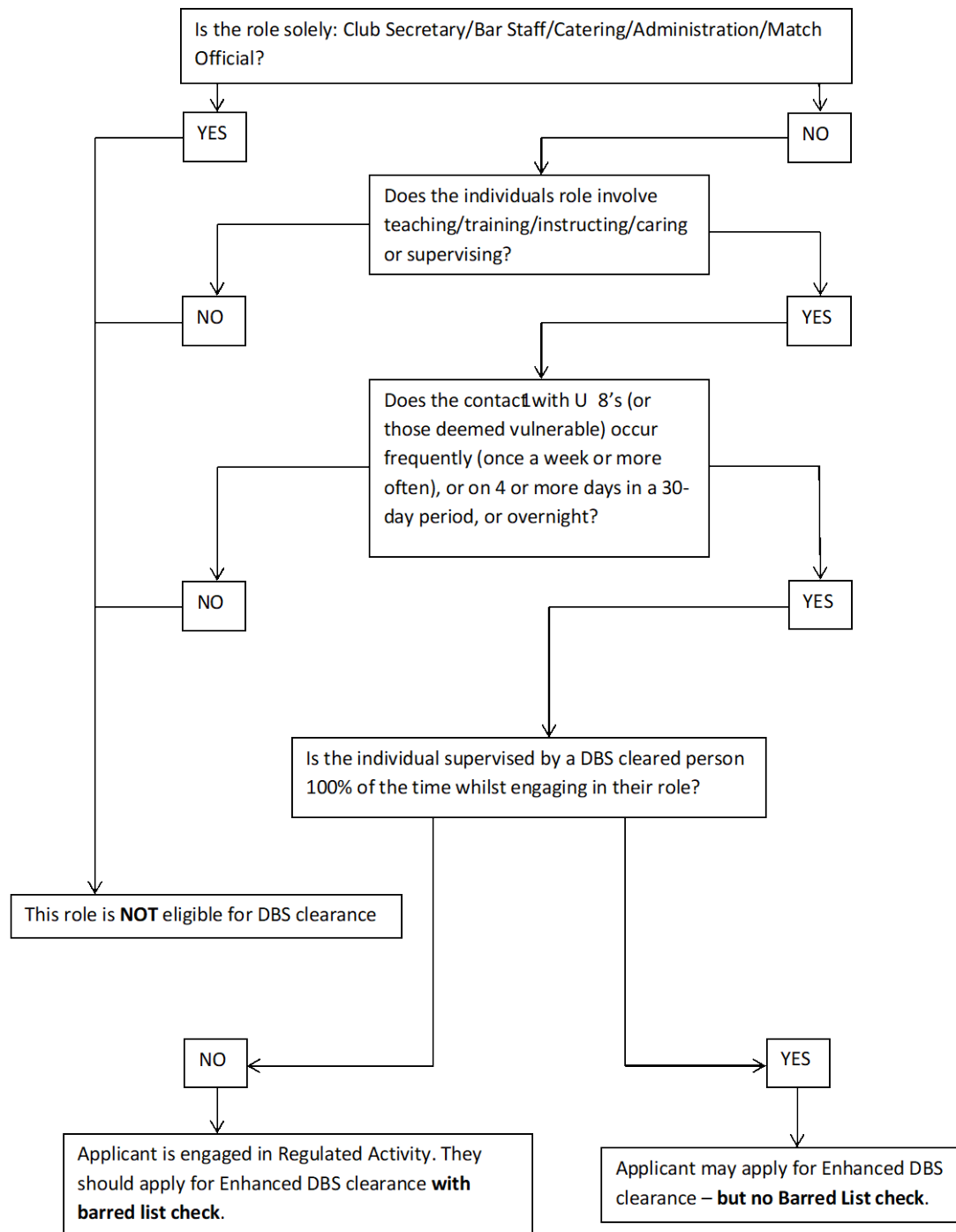


## APPENDIX D- WHO NEEDS A DBS CHECK?



### RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

#### DBS Eligibility Decision Flow-Chart





## APPENDIX E: INCIDENT REPORTING FLOWCHART

PROCEDURES

