



St Neots RUFC Safeguarding Policy

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. St Neots Rugby Union Football Club acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children involved in St Neots from harm
2. St Neots RUFC confirms that it adheres to the Rugby Football Union's Safeguarding Policy and the procedures, practices and guidelines and endorse and adopt the Policy Statement contained in that document and any successor policy.
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 his safety and wellbeing are protected and up to date RFU guidance is checked and followed.
4. The Key Principles of the RFU Safeguarding Policy are that:
 - The welfare of the child 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.
 - 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 organisations, statutory agencies, parents, carers, children and young people is essential for the welfare of children.
 - Children have a 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. St Neots RUFC recognises that all children 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. St Neots RUFC recognises that this is the responsibility of everyone involved, in whatever capacity, at the club.



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6. St Neots RUFC will implement and comply with the RFU Code of Conduct and the Codes of Conduct for Coaches, Spectators and Officials as appropriate.
7. St Neots RUFC Club Safeguarding Officer for 2022/2023 is Peter Arnold (07891565851). If you witness or are aware of an incident where the welfare of a child has been put at risk you must, in the first instance, inform the Club Safeguarding Officer. They will then inform the CB Safeguarding Manager and the RFU Safeguarding Team. If an incident involves the Club Safeguarding Officer you should inform East Midlands CB Safeguarding Manager Steve Minney 07747 830267.
8. All members of St Neots RUFC who work with children in Regulated Activity must undertake an RFU Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check in accordance with RFU Regulation 21.
9. St Neots RUFC will ensure that all its members, whether they are coaches, parents, players or officials will comply with the 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, East Midlands (Constituent Body (CB)) or the RFU:
 - Working alone with a child.
 - Consuming alcohol whilst responsible for children.
 - Providing alcohol to children or allowing its supply.
 - Smoking in the presence of children.
 - Humiliating children.
 - Inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a child.
 - Participating in, or allowing, contact or physical games with children.
 - Having an intimate or sexual relationship with any child developed as a result of being in a 'position of trust.'
 - Making sexually explicit comments or sharing sexually explicit material.
10. St Neots RUFC manages the changing facilities and arranges for them to be supervised by two DBS checked adults of the appropriate gender for the players using the facilities. St Neots RUFC ensures that all its coaches, parents, officials and spectators are aware that adults must not change at the same time, using the same facilities as children (17 year olds playing adult rugby may change with the rest of the team but must be offered the a separate changing and shower space if they wish to use it).
12. St Neots RUFC will ensure that its coaches [and team managers] will receive the support and training considered appropriate to their position and role. The



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RFU “Managing Challenging Behaviour” Policy has been adopted and circulated amongst the club workforce both, voluntary and paid.

13. Any events held on St Neots RUFC premises must comply with this Policy and if appropriate a Safeguarding Plan should be discussed and circulated to those affected. Any tours, overseas or domestic, undertaken by St Neots RUFC must comply with the relevant RFU Regulations and Guidance relating to tours.

General Behaviour:

St Neots RUFC has a duty of care to all children and adults involved with the club. The ability to manage challenging behaviour is part of the overall duty of care/safeguarding, therefore St Neots RUFC recognise that it is important for all coaches and Team Managers to be fully aware of and understand the club's policy about managing challenging behaviour to ensure that they understand the circumstances in which they may need to intervene and are clear about the practice guidance in this area.

U18s Challenging Behaviour

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This policy aims to promote good practice and to encourage a proactive response to supporting children to manage their own behaviour. They suggest some strategies and sanctions which can be used and identify unacceptable sanctions or interventions which must never be used by staff or volunteers.

This policy is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration.



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- All those involved in activities (including children, coaches/Team Managers and parents/carers) should be provided with clear guidelines about required standards of conduct, and the club's process for responding to behaviour that is deemed unacceptable.
- Children must never be subject to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading.
- Some children exhibit challenging behaviour as a result of specific circumstances, eg a medical or psychological condition, and coaches may therefore require specific or additional guidance. These and any other specific needs the child may have should be discussed with parents/carers and the child in planning for the activity, to ensure that an appropriate approach is agreed and, where necessary, additional support provided e.g. from external agencies, Children's Social Care services etc
- Sport can make a significant contribution to improving the life experience and outcomes for all children and young people. Every child should be supported to participate and, only in exceptional circumstances where the safety of a child or of other children cannot be maintained, should a child be excluded from club activities.

Planning Activities

Good coaching practice requires planning sessions around the group but also involves taking into consideration the needs of each individual child within that group. As part of session planning, coaches should consider whether any members of the group have presented in the past or are likely to present any difficulties in relation to the tasks involved, the other participants or the environment. Where coaches and Team Managers identify potential risks, strategies to manage those risks should be agreed in advance of the session, event or activity. The planning should also identify the appropriate number of adults required to safely manage and support the session including being able to adequately respond to any challenging behaviour and to safeguard other members of the group and coaches involved.

The club should seek to work in partnership with parents/carers, and where necessary external agencies, to ensure that a child or young person can be supported to participate safely.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours

Staff, volunteers, children and parents/carers by joining the club agree to the RFU codes of conduct..



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Issues of behaviour and control should regularly be discussed between the coaches, the team manager, parent/carers and children in the context of rights and responsibilities. This could be done at the start of the season, in advance of a trip away on tour, or at other intervals as deemed appropriate. When children are consulted and specifically asked, as a group, to draw up and agree rules that will govern their participation in club activities, experience indicates that they tend to arrive at a very sensible and working set of 'rules' with greater 'buy-in' from participants than those simply imposed by adults within the club. This strategy may be employed by the coaches as they feel appropriate.

Managing Challenging Behaviour - How St Neots RUFC will respond:

In responding to challenging behaviour, the response should always be proportionate to the actions, be imposed as soon as is practicable and be fully explained to the child and their parents/carers.

1. In dealing with children who display negative or challenging behaviours, coaches and team managers should consider the following options at the time of the behaviour:
 - Time out from the activity, group 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 or walk away
 - Discussion with parent/carer regarding behaviour
 - Increased supervision by coaches
 - Physical intervention (See next page)
2. If the negative or challenging behaviours continue despite using the options above the following should be considered:
 - Use of individual 'contracts' or agreements with child and parent/carer for their future or continued participation. These agreements may include the parent being present pitch side for the entire training session/match and required to successfully manage any negative or challenging behaviours before the child can re-join the session.



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3. If the negative or challenging behaviours continue despite the options above being implemented the following course of action may be taken - The relevant age group Chairperson must be made aware of any of the following actions being taken:
 - Sanctions or consequences e.g. missing a match/training session.
 - As a last resort, if a child continues to present a high level of risk or danger to him or herself, or others, he or she may have to be suspended or barred from the group or club activities IE 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 essential facilities.
- Verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation.

Physical Intervention: Responding to high-risk behaviours:

- Any form of physical punishment of children is unlawful, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour
- The use of physical intervention should always be avoided unless it is necessary to prevent a child injuring themselves or others, or causing serious damage to property
- It is particularly important that adults understand this both to protect their own position and the overall reputation of the organisation in which they are involved.
- A decision to restrain a child should be firmly based on the safety of the child and must NEVER be made as a punishment or to get children to comply with instructions
- All forms of physical intervention should form part of a broader approach to the management of challenging behaviour.
- Physical contact to prevent something happening should always be the result of conscious decision-making and not a reaction.
- Before physically intervening, the member of staff or volunteer should ask themselves, 'Is this the only option to manage the situation and ensure safety?' E.g. could I use another strategy?
- It is good practice to ensure that if you must physically intervene in a situation with a child/young person, it is in the least restrictive way necessary to



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prevent them from getting hurt and used only after all other strategies have been exhausted.

- Wherever possible this should be carried out by at least two people and for as short as time as possible talking their way out of the physical intervention
- Consider swapping adults during the intervention to enable the young person a get out and reduce tension and stress.

The following standards 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.
- Coaches 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.
- The minimum force needed to avert injury to a person or serious damage to property and applied for the shortest period.
- 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 the club will seek advice from or to work in partnership with external agencies (e.g. Children's Social Care) to ensure that a child or young person can be supported to participate safely.
- This may include asking for the provision of a suitably trained support worker/volunteer or accessing staff/volunteer training in physical intervention.
- Any physical intervention used should be recorded as soon as possible after the incident by the staff/volunteers involved using the RFU incident report form and passed to the club Safeguarding Officer (Viki Lancaster) as soon as possible.
- The club will monitor the situation via the discipline committee and follow up.



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It is clear from the accounts of children and young people that physical intervention provokes strong feelings. Children may be left physically or emotionally hurt. Even a child who hasn't directly been involved in the situation may be fearful that it will happen to them in future or have been upset by seeing what has happened to others.

A timely debrief for coaches/team managers, the child and parents should always take place following an incident where physical intervention has been used. This should include ensuring that the physical and emotional well-being of those involved has been addressed and ongoing support offered where necessary. Coaches/team managers, children and parents should be given an opportunity to talk about what happened in a calm and safe environment. There should also be a discussion with the child and parents/guardians about the child's needs and continued safe participation in the group or activity. If the child is felt to be 'at risk' or 'in need of protection', then staff will need to follow the Clubs Safeguarding policy.

Reviewing

Coaches and team managers should review the needs of any child for whom sanctions are frequently necessary. This review should involve the child and parents/carers to ensure an informed decision is made about the child's future or continued participation.

Misconduct during matches

Misconduct during matches may invoke the RFU disciplinary procedure.

COVID 19 Policy

The RFU Safeguarding Team are not managing the RFU COVID response and all enquiries should be sent to clubsupport@rfu.com . They are still managing safeguarding concerns/ referrals as usual.

For Covid 19 guidance please see the separate St Neots RUFC policy and RFU Covid 19 guidance.