



## **Safeguarding Policy Season 2021/22**

### **Underpinning Club Values**

Everyone shares responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, irrespective of individual roles. Nevertheless, in order that organisations and practitioners collaborate effectively, it is vital that all partners who work with children – including local authorities, the police, the health service, the courts, professionals, the voluntary sector and individual members of local communities – are aware of, and appreciate, the role that each of them play in this area.

Folkestone Rugby Football Club is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults in the sport. All children and vulnerable adults are entitled to protection from harm and have the right to take part in sport in a safe, positive and enjoyable environment.

### **Club Responsibilities**

- Folkestone Rugby Club (FRFC) acknowledges its responsibilities, to safeguard the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults involved in FRFC activities including match play, training, touring and any general club activity completed within club grounds or external venues.
- Folkestone Rugby Club through this Policy confirms its support to the Rugby Football Unions Safeguarding Policy and all supporting protocols and procedures.
- The Club has in place a Safeguarding Officer Marina Uden. Contact details 07969 736285.

### **Definition**

- A child is anyone under the age of eighteen engaged in rugby union activity, particular care must be taken, and controls implemented where any under seventeen player is playing in an adult game, where this becomes apparent the Safeguarding Officer must be consulted.

**Vulnerable adults** are defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as someone 18 years or older who has:

- a dependency upon others, or a requirement for assistance from others, in the performance of basic physical functions
- severe impairment in their ability to communicate with others
- an impairment in their ability to protect themselves from assault, abuse or neglect
- has been detained in lawful custody or is being supervised as a result of a court order

### **Key Principles**

- The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount
- All participants regardless of age, gender, ability or disability, race, faith, size, language or sexual identity, have the right to protection from harm
- All allegations and suspicions of harm will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately
- Everyone will work in partnership to promote the welfare, health and development of children and vulnerable adults
- The interests of those who work or volunteer with children and vulnerable adults will be protected

### **Mandatory Vetting of Volunteers and Employees**

FRFC will ensure that all adults working with children and vulnerable adults within the Club in a voluntary or paid capacity will have an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) this will be continually monitored by the safeguarding Officer with reports produced for the Clubs Executive Committee bi-monthly.

### **Club Best Practice**

Folkestone Rugby Club follows the RFU/County best practice guidelines in regard to all aspects of Safeguarding, as a club we have completed the following and have in place-

- A Safeguarding Officer (CSO)
- We have placed the Safeguarding Officers role as an Executive Position within the Club
- We ensure all Safeguarding issues have an Independent agenda slot at the Clubs Executive Management meeting
- We carry out Safeguarding workshops for all staff and coaches
- Informs all members, parents and children when a new CSO is appointed;
- We have published a Clubs Safeguarding Policy and made it accessible to all members
- We ensure all club officers and committee members are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities

- We ensure that at any youth disciplinary Investigation the Safeguarding Officer/Club supports the child and ensures the child's emotional wellbeing throughout, this care is extended to all parties during any investigation or accusation between one party and another.
- We have supported both RFU and County initiatives where Safeguarding is highlighted
- We will provide Executive Officer support to the Safeguarding Officer where required.

### **Reporting**

The Club supports the RFU's aim is to create a culture where everyone feels confident to raise legitimate concerns without prejudice to their own position.

Concerns about the behaviour of coaches, officials or any members of the paid and volunteer workforce which may be harmful to a child or vulnerable adult in their care must be reported to the Club in the first instance the Club will report any incident to RFU Safeguarding Team through the Club Safeguarding Officer.

### **Alcohol**

It is important that all rugby clubs' management committees take considered, positive action to ensure that they are responsible licensees. It is against the law:

- To sell alcohol to someone under 18
- For an adult to buy or attempt to buy alcohol on behalf of someone under 18
- For someone under 18 to buy alcohol, attempt to buy alcohol or to be sold alcohol
- For someone under 18 to drink alcohol in licensed premises, with one exception - 16- and 17-year olds accompanied by an adult can drink but not buy beer, wine and cider with a **table meal**
- For an adult to buy alcohol for a person under 18 for consumption on licensed premises, except as above

At training sessions and games/events for children, adults' drinking habits may affect both children's attitude to alcohol and their emotional well-being. As role models adults should avoid excessive drinking in their presence.

The unexpected can always happen; there should always be adults who abstain from drinking alcohol to deal with any emergencies and to manage the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults in their care

### **Inappropriate Relationships with Children or Vulnerable Adults**

An adult in a position of trust must not enter into a sexual relationship with a child in their care. Sexual intercourse, sexual activity, or inappropriate touching by an adult with a child under the age of 16 years is a criminal offence, even where there is apparent consent from the child.

A consensual sexual relationship between an adult in a position of trust and a child over 16 years of age, or a vulnerable adult, is a breach of trust and an abuse of the adult's position. Whilst it may not be a criminal offence, in a rugby union setting it will be treated very seriously and may result in RFU disciplinary action, including suspension from attending rugby clubs

### **Changing rooms and showers**

- 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.

### **Transportation to Games, Training or Events**

In most instances it is the responsibility of parents, not the club, to transport their child or vulnerable adult to and from the club or nominated meeting point. If parents make arrangements between themselves this is a private arrangement and at the parents' discretion.

### **Photographic Images**

FRFC welcomes the taking of appropriate images of children in rugby clubs the RFU has developed guidance for parents and the paid and volunteer workforce to enable suitable photographs to be taken celebrating the Core Values of the sport. There are risks associated with the use of photographic images. RFU Guidance on Photographic Images and professional photography can be found on the Safeguarding pages of [rfu.com](http://rfu.com)

### **Good role models**

The paid and volunteer workforce should consistently display high standards of personal behaviour and appearance and refrain from pursuits considered unhealthy in front of their players. They must not make sexually explicit comments to children or vulnerable adults and any language which causes them to feel uncomfortable or lose confidence or self-esteem is unacceptable, as is the use of obscene or foul language. FRFC will take serious action against any Club official who fails to adhere to the above requirement, in addition to the above the following bad practice will be considered to be a failure to maintain the correct standards.

- General seclusion of any player

- Aggressive behaviour towards any player official or club representative
- Inappropriate media use that deems to victimise or implicate a child
- Any sexually suggestive comments
- Active encouragement of children to drink alcohol within the Club and club external areas for any reason, this extends to parental permission.

### **concerns about the welfare and safety of children and vulnerable adults**

Safeguarding vulnerable people is everyone's responsibility. This means that everyone in rugby has a responsibility to respond to any concerns that they or others, may have about a child or vulnerable adult, or the behaviour of an adult.

Harm in the context of this policy is an action or behaviour which has a detrimental effect on a child or vulnerable adult's physical or emotional health or wellbeing. Harm is often referred to as neglect, abuse or bullying

Harm may start as poor practice, which might include:

- Shouting
- Excessive training
- Ignoring health and safety guidelines
- Failing to adhere to the club's Safeguarding Policy
- Poor management of multiple squad age groups, including favouring or discriminating against particular teams and ridicule of players' errors.

Neither poor practice nor suspicions of harm should be ignored. Whether physical, sexual, emotional, bullying or neglect, suspicions of harm should always be reported, and victims supported throughout. Signs of harm It is important that in the rugby environment signs of harm are not ignored. These signs may include a child or vulnerable adult:

- Changing their usual routine
- Beginning to be disruptive during sessions
- Becoming withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Having possessions going missing
- Becoming aggressive or unreasonable
- Starting to stammer or stopping communicating
- Having unexplained cuts or bruises
- Starting to bully other children
- Being frequently dirty, hungry or inadequately dressed
- Displaying sexual behaviour or using sexual language inappropriate for their age
- Seeming afraid of parents or carers
- Stopping eating
- Being frightened to say what's wrong
- Not wanting to attend training or club activities, or even leaving the club

An individual who becomes aware of any suspicions or concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or vulnerable adult must pass these on to the CSO as soon as possible.

FRFC will implement a full investigation reporting procedure that supports the current RFU guidelines the following rules will be implemented

### **Incident Referral Process**

FRFC will on receiving any allegation of harm will carry out a full investigation, the investigation process will be led by the Clubs Safeguarding Officer and supported by a minimum of one Executive Officer. The aim of the investigation is to gather information from all parties, this may require information from additional third parties that may include children where this is necessary, they must be accompanied by an adult.

The Investigation will look explore the reasons for the allegation and provide recommendations to The Kent County Rugby Safeguarding Team, in turn Count will provide details of the incident/allegation to the Rugby Football Union. Once the RFU Safeguarding team receives written notification of an incident, allegation or disclosure they assume management of the case (providing it is not being dealt with by the police).

**Once the RFU assumes management the club should take no further action until advised to do so by the RFU or relevant authority.**

The RFU will ensure that the club and Constituent Body are kept informed of procedure and progress.

Safeguarding investigations are handled by the RFU Safeguarding team and presented to the RFU's Referral Management Group (RMG) or its Sub-Group for consideration. The RMG is a cross-departmental group charged by the RFU with assessing the risk that individuals pose to children and vulnerable adults. The RMG is supported by an independent child protection adviser. Incidents may be referred by the RMG to the RFU Disciplinary department.

### **Those under investigation**

Under this policy the RFU is committed, first and foremost, to protecting the interests of the child or vulnerable adult. In the course of a referral being made to the RFU or statutory agencies, individuals who are accused of causing harm will be informed of the procedures by the RFU. They may also request at any time an update on the progress of the referral. No further support will be offered by the RFU during the course of the investigation.

The Citizens Advice Bureau may be a useful source of information and support in these instances. Investigations are concluded as quickly as possible to ensure that those guilty of causing harm are dealt with expeditiously and those falsely or mistakenly accused are able to return to the game with reputation intact.

Suspension from Rugby Union A temporary suspension order or suspension order may be issued by the RFU Legal Officer in accordance with RFU Regulations. Please refer to the RFU Regulations found in the RFU Handbook or on [rfu.com](http://rfu.com) for further information.

---

Marina Uden

Safeguarding Officer

September 2021