

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY MARCH BEARS RUFC

INTRODUCTION

March Bears Rugby Union Football Club (Cambridgeshire) has adopted this policy because it is accepted that it is the responsibility of every adult to ensure children enjoy rugby union in a safe environment.

As a Club we have a responsibility to:

- Safeguard and promote the interests and well being of children who play rugby.
- Respect children's rights, wishes and feelings.
- Take all reasonable practical steps to protect children from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment
- Ensure that all adults are aware of their responsibilities when working with young children

The child protection procedures will:

- Offer safeguards to the children with whom we work, and to our professional members of staff, coaches and club members.
- Help to maintain the professionalism and the safeguards of good practice which are associated with the RFU and RFUW
- In order for the child protection policy to be effective it is necessary for Codes of Conduct to be in force for the following persons:
 - The Welfare Officer:- **(See appendix A)**
 - The Coaches:- **(See appendix B)**
 - The Players:- **(See appendix C)**
 - Helpers & carers:- **(See appendix D)**
 - Parents and Supporters:- **(See appendix E)**

Structure of document

This document sets out our policies and is based around guidance from the RFU. Copies of all RFU documents can be found at: www.community-rugby.com/communityrugby/index.cfm

Section

- 1) Principle statement
- 2) Policy Overview
- 3) Policy and procedure on abuse
 - a) Inside the Rugby Environment
 - b) Outside the Rugby Environment
- 4) Policy and procedure on behaviour
- 5) Prohibited practices
- 6) Codes of Conduct:
 - a) Welfare Officer
 - b) Coaches
 - c) Helpers and Carers
 - d) Players
 - e) Parents and Supporters
- 7) Useful information
- 8) RFU Incident Record Form

SECTION ONE

Principle Statement

The young player's welfare is paramount.

All young players whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.

All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Anyone under the age of **18** years will be considered as a young player for the purposes of this document.

The club has appointed James Pepper and Jenny Hannigan as Child Welfare Officers who shall be responsible for the implementation, monitoring and the enforcement of the clubs child protection policy, along with the help and support of the Executive Committee.

It is the aim of the Club to build a safe, enjoyable environment, which will foster a lifelong commitment to the game of rugby, for all participants and members, regardless of current ability. We believe that we will achieve this aim by adhering to these policies and ensuring that rugby is an enjoyable and positive experience for all

SECTION TWO

Child Welfare Policy – Overview

At March Bears RUFC, the health, wellbeing and welfare of the children who train with us and represent the club, or who visit us, is of paramount concern.

Serious incidents of abuse

Incidents of physical, sexual and serious emotional abuse are rare. Should you believe that you know of, or have witnessed, or possibly witnessed, such an incident you should contact one of our Child Welfare Officers without delay. Their contact details are on the website and kept on a list of officers on the notice board in the clubhouse.

Details of our procedure are contained in the next section. Also included are details of what to do if a child confides in you, or you believe may confide in you, about such matters. Please do read this section – the law isn't as obvious as you may assume.

Our commitment to children, parents and coaches is that we will treat any incident seriously and sensitively, involving the appropriate professionals, remembering that the needs of the child are paramount.

Duty of Care

We believe that we have a duty of care to the children who play in our teams and train with us, and this extends to ensuring that our coaches are appropriately qualified and understand their responsibilities. It is the Club's policy that coaches should have attained the RFU coaching course qualifications appropriate to their age group. All regular coaches and officers of the Club will be CRB checked. The Club will ask a coach to discontinue coaching if he or she refuses to be checked, or persistently fails to complete the forms. This policy doesn't just protect the Club and the children – it also protects the individual, so please support us in making sure that all relevant individuals are properly checked.

The Prohibited Practices section also lists some "Do's" and "Don'ts" for all those involved to help ensure that they do not inadvertently expose themselves to allegations of inappropriate behaviour.

CRB Disclosure

All adults who have 'regular supervisory contact with young people' must undertake CRB disclosure within eight weeks of their appointment to a position which involves regular supervisory contact with young people.

These adults will include:

- Professional Staff
- All coaches/assistance coaches
- Members of the Youth Rugby Sections
- All Referees whom regularly officiate youth games
- Welfare Officers
- Volunteers
- Club administrators

CRB disclosures must be conducted through the RFU Child Protection Department who have jurisdiction to deal with any matter arising from any such disclosure.

Behaviour

Whilst serious incidents are rare, concerns and complaints about behaviour are more frequent. The Club is affiliated to the RFU and we are signed up to, and strongly support, their Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics (which can be found at: www.community-rugby.com/communityrugby/index.cfm, go to the Schools and Youth section and then choose "welfare"). We understand that different organisations, schools and families have different approaches to coaching, support and the motivation of children. However, whilst training at March Bears RUFC or representing the Club, we ask that all children, coaches, parents and supporters respect our policies and standards. We will also make it clear to visiting Clubs that we expect the Code of Conduct of the RFU to be respected. Our policies can be found in full in later sections, but are summarised here:

- the welfare of the children is paramount
- feedback to, and support of, the children should be positive, constructive and supportive
- it is never acceptable to verbally abuse the referee, the opposition and their supporters or any child in the team
- all children should be accorded equal respect, regardless of current ability
- children and young people play for fun and enjoyment and winning is only a part of it – the winning ethic should not be over emphasised
- all activities should be age appropriate and undertaken with regard to the safety of the children
- the relationships between coaches and children should be built on mutual respect and openness, and the rights and dignity of all children should be respected

The Club aims to provide a safe environment for the children, but parents must realise that this is a mutual responsibility. Responsibilities for parents include:

- In the younger age groups, ensure that a designated adult is present during training and matches

- In older age groups, ensure that emergency contact details are available
- Drop off and collect children promptly
- Inform the Club of any medical issues (this information will be available to the coaches) including severe allergies
- Ensure that the child has the correct safety kit and appropriate clothing
- Respect the policies and procedures of the club
- Respect the decision of the Club not to serve alcohol to any person under eighteen years of age

If you have concerns that these standards of behaviour are not being observed, either by children, coaches, supporters or visiting teams, tell one of the Child Welfare Officers – preferably at the time.

SECTION THREE

A. Policy and procedure on instances of abuse taking place within the Rugby Environment

The club will not tolerate any form of abuse towards Members of the club. There are of course so many forms of abuse that it would not be possible to provide a definitive list.

However, the four main forms of abuse are:

1. Emotional abuse
2. Abuse by neglect
3. Physical abuse
4. Sexual abuse

Guidance about how to detect and understand abuse is available on the RFU website at www.community-rugby.com/communityrugby/index

PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS

If anyone has concern about the behaviour of a member of staff, coach or volunteer or any other person they should follow the following procedure:

If you become aware of anything which causes you to feel uncomfortable you should talk to the Club Welfare Officer or CB Welfare Manager.

This means being aware of the attitudes of staff, coaches and volunteers and of the interactions between them and the children and with each other.

If the behaviour is contrary to the Club or RFU/RFUW Welfare Policy and Procedures and young people are at risk then action must be taken.

Adults must also be alert to any unusual incidents or activities which take place where staff, Coaches or volunteers are putting young people and themselves in a vulnerable position. In all cases of reported poor practice/abuse the following principles should be adopted:

DO

- **Stay calm** – do not rush into inappropriate action.
React calmly in order not to alarm the young person.
- **Reassure the child** – that they are not to blame and confirm that you know how difficult it must be to confide.
- **Listen sympathetically** – to what the child says and show that you take them seriously.
- **Keep questions to minimum** – the law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested. Only ask questions to clarify.
- **Ensure you clearly understand what the child has said** – in order that the information can be passed on to the appropriate agencies.
- **Consult with the Club Welfare Officer or CB Welfare Manager** ensuring that you communicate all the information accurately.
- **Maintain Confidentiality** – all incidents will be treated with an open mind and handled in a fair and equitable manner. Information will only be shared on a need to know basis. Confidentiality must be maintained until a case is proven.
- **Ensure the safety of the young person** – if urgent medical attention is required then call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concerns and ensure they are aware that this is a child protection issue.
- **Listen sympathetically** – to what the child says and show that you take them seriously.

DON'T

- Don't panic – or allow your feelings to be evident.
- Don't make promises you cannot keep – explain that you will need to tell other people
- Don't make the child repeat the story unnecessarily.
- Don't delay.
- Don't speculate or make assumptions.
- Don't approach the alleged abuser
- Don't take sole responsibility.

In all cases, if you are not sure what to do you can gain help from NSPCC 24-hour helpline 0800 800 5000 or the RFU Child Protection Line 0208 831 6655.

In all cases a written record will be kept of the allegation, the investigation and the outcome. This record will be kept confidentially.

B. Policy and procedure for abuse taking place outside the Rugby Environment

It may come to notice that abuse of a young person is suspected of taking place outside the rugby environment. If this is the case it will be dealt with as follows:

- Ensure the safety of the young person. If he/she requires immediate treatment, call an ambulance, inform doctors of concerns and ensure they are aware that this is a Child Protection issue. If a young person is taken to hospital Social Services must be informed immediately.

RFU/RFUW procedures should then be followed:

- Report concerns to Club Welfare Officer.
- Club Welfare Officer will seek advice from RFU Child Protection Officer, CB Welfare Manager, RFU Child Protection Helpline or NSPCC Helpline 0800 800 5000.
- If there is any delay in receiving advice contact must be made with Social Services.
- If a formal referral is made, make it clear to Social Services/Police that this is a Child Protection referral.
- All police forces have dedicated Child Abuse Investigation Teams (CAITs) which deal with allegations of abuse within the family setting and by people in positions of trust. If you believe that a child is in immediate danger or has come to physical harm, dial 999.
- Parents/carers should only be contacted following advice from Police or Social Services.

Non-action is not an option. The welfare of the young person is paramount to every other consideration. Delay in acting can increase the risk to the child.

General Advice

In all cases please always remember the following:

It is often more difficult for some young people to disclose abuse than others. Previous experiences of prejudice may lead them to believe that those in authority do not really care about their well being. Disabled young people may have to overcome additional barriers before feeling that they can disclose abuse. They may rely on the abuser for their daily care and not know of alternative sources of care. The abuse may be the only attention/affection they have experienced. There may be communication differences and they will almost certainly have to overcome prejudices which block our willingness to believe they may be abused or to use their medical condition to explain away indicators which in an able-bodied young person would concern us.

These groups of people need us to be extra vigilant and to give thought as to how we will respond.

Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only, following advice from social services/police. This may include the following people:

- The Club Welfare Officer
- The CB Welfare Manager
- Designated Officers within the RFU/RFUW
- Parents/carers of the young person alleged to have been abused

SECTION FOUR

Policy and Procedure on Appropriate Behaviour

There are many instances where behaviour may clearly not be categorised as abuse, but where parents, or supporters, or members are unhappy with the attitude or conduct of another parent, member or coach. Please discuss this, in the first instance, with one of the Child Welfare Officers.

Please remember, as a member of March Bears RUFC, we expect the following standards of behaviour from all members:

- Recognise the importance of fun and enjoyment when officiating, coaching or supporting young players.
- Provide verbal feedback in a positive way during games.
- Appreciate the needs of the players.
- Be a positive role model.
- Recognise that safety is paramount.
- Explain decisions – most young players are still learning.
- Never tolerate verbal abuse.

SECTION FIVE

Prohibited Practices and Positions of Trust

The RFU have a mandatory policy which outlines the practices which are prohibited and their expectations of those who are placed in a position of Trust. The Club fully endorses the RFU policies in this regard, and they are reproduced below.

Coaches, managers or volunteers including all professional staff must never:

- a. Take young people to their own home or any other place where they will be alone with them;
- b. Spend any amount of time alone with young people away from others;
- c. Take young people alone on car journeys, however short;
- d. If it should arise that such situations are unavoidable they should only take place with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the Club/governing body and/or a person with parental responsibility for the young person. In exceptional circumstances where a coach, manager or volunteer cannot obtain the consent of the someone in charge in the club/governing body and/or person with parental responsibility for the young person then if it is in the welfare interest of the young person, paragraphs (a) and (c) do not have to be followed. If this occurs the adult must record the occurrence with the Club/governing body welfare officer.
- e. Engage in rough, physical games, sexually provocative games or horseplay with children/young people;
- f. Take part as a player in any dynamic contact games or training sessions with young people. If there is a need for an adult to facilitate learning within a coaching session through the use of coaching aids e.g. contact pads, this should be done with the utmost care and with due regard to the safety of the young players;
- g. Share a room with a young person unless the individual is the parent/guardian of that young person;
- h. Engage in any form of inappropriate sexual contact and/or behaviour;
- i. Allow any form of inappropriate touching (see Guidance Document, Appendix 4);
- j. Make sexually suggestive remarks to a young person even in fun;
- k. Use inappropriate language or allow young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- l. Allow allegations by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- m. Do things of a personal nature for a young person that they can do for themselves unless you have been requested to do so by the parents/carer

(please note that it is recognised that some young people will always need help with things such as lace tying, adjustment of Tag belts, fitting head guards and it is also recognised that this does not preclude anyone attending to an injured/ill young person or rendering first aid);

- n. Depart the rugby Club or agreed rendezvous point until the safe dispersal of all young people is complete;
- o. Cause an individual to lose self esteem by embarrassing, humiliating or undermining the individual;
- p. Treat some young people more favourably than others; or
- q. Agree to meet a young person on their own on a one to one basis.

Positions of Trust

All adults who work with young people are in a position of trust which has been invested in them by the parents, the sport and the young person. This relationship can be described as one in which the adult is in a position of power and influence by virtue of their position.

Sexual intercourse or touching by an adult with a child under the age of 16 years is unlawful, even where there is apparent consent from the child. A consensual sexual relationship between an adult in a position of trust within the rugby setting and a child over 16 years of age is contrary to the Policy and Procedures for the Welfare of Young People in the Sport of Rugby Union.

Adults must not encourage a physical or emotionally dependant relationship to develop between the person in a position of trust and the young person in their care.

All those within the organisation have a duty to raise concerns about the behaviour of coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and professional staff which may be harmful to the children, young people in their care, without prejudice to their own position.

SECTION SIX

Codes of Conduct

Appendix A

THE WELFARE OFFICER CODE OF CONDUCT

The Welfare Officers will be subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check. .

If the Welfare Officer is a coach then they will also comply with the coaches Code of Conduct. The Welfare Officers will ensure that the child protection policy is in force and is complied with, within the club.

The Welfare Officers will ensure that all coaches comply with criteria for becoming a club coach and undergo all necessary training.

The Welfare Officers will keep a record of all details relating to coaches.

Upon receipt of any form of complaint the Welfare Officer will immediately comply with the criteria in this policy in respect of investigating and reporting the incident.

The Welfare Officers will keep a record of all complaints received, together with details of the investigation including the outcome of the investigation and action taken

Appendix B

THE COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

Any coach working with young players within a Rugby Union Football Club is part of a structure with many stakeholders, and as such the coach has responsibilities to all of them. This code has been written to remind or inform coaches of those responsibilities and the minimum standards of behaviour commensurate with fulfilling them.

Each season every coach active in the section will be called on to warrant that they have read understood and intend to abide by this code.

Be aware that the Codes of Conduct exist; read and understand them.

Be aware that the clubs Child Protection Policy exists; read and understand it.

Code of Conduct for Coaches

PLAYERS

- Rugby is only part of their lives, recognise this and allow for it on your demands on them.
- Treat games against other clubs as lessons, opportunities to learn, not as a test.
- Rugby is not for everyone. Do not rely on your star player and never make a player feel like a spare part. Share your time and game time equally.
- Never ridicule or belittle any player. Make every player feel valued. To do this would be considered as emotional abuse.
- Take an interest in each player. Know a little about his/her family and other interests. Be able to spot changes in their behaviour.
- Find out the facts about child development and the physical, intellectual and emotional capabilities of the age group that you work with.

RUGBY UNION

- Rugby is a potentially dangerous game, which relies upon every player having mutual respect. Teach the players you work with the meaning of fair play and set them a good example.
- Rugby works best when sides are evenly matched. Try to avoid mismatch, especially during training sessions.
- Understand the continuum and abide by it. You have no options, as they are the laws of the game.
- Learn the laws and how to referee.
- Teach players by your own example to respect the referee.

COACHING

- When you call yourself a coach you apply to join the elite, when others call you a coach you have achieved membership. Behave as you would expect a coach should.
- Always look like a coach, always act like a coach.
- Try to start and finish on time.
- Plan your sessions and Plan your season.
- Do not drink alcohol before or during your coaching.
- Never give alcohol to those not old enough to drink it by law.
- Do not smoke when coaching.
- Never ignore bad coaching practice or behaviour.
- Keep up to date with current coaching practices and law.
- Be aware that you are responsible for the players you work with, so don't allow players to play on an injury. Refer them to a doctor or sports injury clinic. Ensure you enter ALL injuries into the accident book and get a parent/guardian to sign the entry. It is for your protection.
- Ensure the safety of the children you are coaching by making sure that they have the correct safety equipment and adequate clothing for the conditions. To fail to do this could be considered as Neglect or physical abuse.
- Ensure safety by teaching the correct techniques; ensure the playing area is safe and free from glass, wood and other such nuisances. Ensure the equipment used is in order. If it is not report it, don't just put it back for the next person to find.
- **DO NOT PUT YOURSELF IN A POSITION WHERE YOU COULD BE SUSPECTED OF VERBAL, PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE WITH ANY CHILD.**

Appendix C

THE PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT

Code of Conduct for Players

- Learn the laws of the game and always play within the laws.
- Learn to play the game safely.
- Respect the coaches, the referees, your opponents, your team mates, and any spectators.
- Turn up for training , prepared, on time and with a positive attitude
- Wear suitable kit for training and match sessions, as agreed with the Coach/Manager
- Rugby is a team game, be a member of the whole team.
- Do not bully any of your team mates.
- If you see any bullying by your team mates or any other person report it to your coach, he knows how to deal with it.

Appendix D

CARERS / HELPERS CODE OF CONDUCT

Carers / helpers should be aware of the Child Protection Policy and they should read and understand it.

Carers / helpers should not accept bad practice or unlawful acts by any Person. Such acts should be reported immediately.

Appendix E

PARENTS / SUPPORTERS CODE OF CONDUCT

Your child has entered the game of rugby and as such the club is sure that you will want to support them. However it must never be forgotten that the game of rugby is for the enjoyment of the players.

- Respect all players, coaches and officials.
- Do not swear at any person present, during training or games.
- Do not give negative criticism, encourage, the game will improve with encouragement. It will not with criticism.
- As a parent you should be aware that the club has a child protection policy, it is available for you to read. Should you become aware of any bad practice towards players, don't ignore it. Report it.
- Do not allow your child to play on an injury and do not force your child to take part in sport.
- Assist your child to learn the laws of the game and encourage them to play within the laws of the game.
- Ensure that your child has adequate clothing and equipment to play the game safely.
- Never give alcohol to those not old enough to drink it by law

SECTION SEVEN

Useful Information

March Bears Rugby Club Welfare Officer's contact details:

James Pepper: 07910 911875 or 07761 050874

Email: webmaster@marchbearsrufc.org.uk

Cambridgeshire Child Welfare Manager contact details:

Chris Mepham: 01763 208620 or 7812 939509

Email: cdmepham@btinternet.com

ECRU Child Welfare Manager contact details:

Martin Peacock: 01284 761536

Email: peacockrm@aol.com

Police Contact Number:

Please dial 999

The RFU Child Protection Officer:

Ann Hutchins

0870 143 2438

07921 283200

Email: annhutchins@rfu.com

The RFU Equity, Welfare & Medical Manager

Steve Farr

0870 143 2438

07730 814159

Email: stevfarr@rfu.com

The RFUW Child Protection Lead Officer

Carol Isherwood

07973 829074

Email carolisherwood@rfu.com

RFU Helpline

0208 831 6655

NSPCC Helpline

24 Hour helpline 0808 800 5000

Asian Helpline 0800 096 7719

Welsh Helpline 0800 100 2524

Deaf Users Text phone: 0800 056 0686

www.nspcc.org.uk

This is a 24-hour free and confidential telephone Helpline that provides counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk of ill treatment or abuse.

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)

3 Gilmour Close, Beaumont Leys, Leicester, LE4 1EZ

Telephone: 0116 234 7278

www.thecpsu.org.uk

Note in the case where contact is to be made with Social Services it is advised that contact is made with the Police, as this is easier and they will be able to contact the required agency.

SECTION EIGHT

RFU/W INCIDENT REPORT FORM	
Your Name:	Your Club::
Contact Details:	Position in Club:
Telephone No:	
Name and Contact Details of Person Making Allegation:	
Date & Time of Incident:	Where incident took place:
Type of Incident:	
Child/Young Person's Name	Age:
Parent/Carer's address:	Telephone No:

Name of adult against allegation is made:	Age:
Contact Details:	Position at Club:
Member of Club: Yes/No	
Relationship between adult (against whom the allegation has been made) and child/young person, if any:	
Details of Incident:	

[Empty box for notes]

Were there any witnesses? If so, please state name and contact details:

[Empty box for witness details]

If Child/Young Person spoke to you directly, please record actual details and words used by the child. (Remember do not lead or question the child or young person.)

[Empty box for direct quotes]

Action taken so far by you:	
Other bodies contacted:	If Yes, which:
NSPCC/POLICE/SOCIAL SERVICES	Name & Contact Details
Referred to CB Welfare Manager: Yes/No	
Any other information:	