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**BOURNEMOUTH RUGBY
FOOTBALL CLUB**

**CHILD PROTECTION
POLICY**

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 It is the responsibility of every adult working in rugby union, whether as a professional or a volunteer, to ensure that all young people can enjoy the sport in a safe enjoyable environment.

1.2 Bournemouth Rugby Football Club (BRFC) recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all young people involved in the game by protecting them from physical, emotional or sexual harm and from neglect or bullying of any kind.

1.3 BRFC is resolute in meeting its obligation to ensure that in providing playing opportunities for young people they do so to the highest possible standards of care. The policy and procedures apply to all those who are subject to the jurisdiction of BRFC whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.

1.4 The members of BRFC recognise that they have a responsibility:

1.4.1 To safeguard and promote the interests and well-being of young people with whom they are working.

1.4.2 To ensure that all adults who work with young people are aware of their role and responsibilities and that training opportunities are made available to them.

1.4.3 To take all reasonable practical steps to protect young people from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment.

1.4.4 To respect young peoples' rights, reasonable wishes and feelings.

1.4.5 To take all reasonable steps to ensure that individuals involved in the game are aware of situations, which may compromise their responsibility or position

1.5 Procedures laid down in this policy will:

1.5.1 Offer safeguards to the young people with whom we work, and to our coaches and other club members.

1.5.2 Help to maintain the professionalism and the safeguards of good practice which are associated with BRFC. It is recognised that any procedure is only as effective as the ability and skill of those who operate it. BRFC are, therefore, committed to the effective recruitment, and appropriate training for all our coaches, volunteers and club members. This will enable them to work together with parents/carers and other organisations to ensure that the needs and the welfare of young people remain paramount.

SECTION 2

KEY PRINCIPLES

2.1 Anyone under the age of 18 should be considered as a young person for the purposes of this document.

2.2 The welfare of all young people is paramount.

2.3 All young people, whatever their age, gender, culture, ability, language, religious beliefs, racial origin, and/or sexual identity should be able to enjoy the game in a fun environment, safe from abuse of any kind.

2.4 It is the responsibility of child protection experts to determine whether abuse has taken place, but it is everyone's responsibility within rugby union to report concerns.

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

2.6 All Constituent Bodies, clubs, Academies and schools have been provided with appropriate documentation, training and support to ensure that they are able to implement RFU/RFUW policy.

2.7 Individuals working with young people will be made aware of good practice in order to ensure that they are not placed in situations where allegations could be made.

2.8 Working in partnership with parents/carers is essential for the protection of young people.

2.9 BRFC recognises the statutory responsibilities of Social Services departments and the police to ensure the welfare of young people and is committed to complying with Local Area Child Protection Committee procedures.

SECTION 3

LEGAL AND PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK

The practices and procedures within this policy are based on the principles contained within UK and international legislation and government guidance and have been designed to complement Local Area Child Protection Committee procedures and take the following into consideration:

3.1.1 *The Children Act 1989*

3.1.2 *The Protection of Children Act 1999*

3.1.3 *Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People 1999*

3.1.4 *"Caring for the Young and Vulnerable"- Home Office Guidance for Preventing the Abuse of Trust 1999*

3.1.5 *The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000*

3.1.6 *The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*

3.1.7 *The Human Rights Act 1998*

3.1.8 *"What to do if you are worried a child may be being abused" - DOH 2003*

SECTION 4

RECOGNISING ABUSE IN RUGBY UNION

Abuse is a powerful and emotive term. It is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by individuals and often by those they know and trust. **Coaches and others working with young people hold this trust and may be at risk of misusing their power over the young players.** In order to provide young people with the best possible experiences and opportunities in rugby union, it is imperative that everyone operates within an accepted ethical framework and demonstrates exemplary behaviour. This not only ensures that rugby union makes a positive contribution to the development of young people and safeguards their welfare, but also protects all personnel from false allegations of abuse or poor practice. It is not always easy to differentiate poor practice from abuse, albeit intentional or unintentional. It is not, therefore, the responsibility of employees or volunteers in rugby union to determine whether or not abuse is taking place. **It is, however, their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and to act if they have a concern about the welfare of a young person.** (See Section 13 to reference “Good Practice in the Rugby Setting”) *There may also be an increased risk within many sports, including rugby union, for abuse to occur which does not necessarily fit into these categories.*

The four main types of abuse are:

4.1 EMOTIONAL ABUSE

This occurs when individuals persistently fail to show young people due care, love or affection, where a young person may be constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted, or be subjected to sarcasm and unrealistic pressures. There may also be over protection, preventing young people from socialising, or bullying to perform to high expectations. The young person may lose self-confidence and may become withdrawn and nervous.

In a rugby situation, emotional abuse may occur when coaches:

- 4.1.1 Provide repeated negative feedback;
- 4.1.2 Repeatedly ignore a young player’s efforts to progress;
- 4.1.3 Repeatedly demand performance levels above those of which the young player is capable;
- 4.1.4 Over-emphasise the winning ethic.

4.2 ABUSE BY NEGLIGENCE

This occurs when a young person’s essential needs for food, warmth and care fail to be met. Failing to or refusing to provide love and affection could also be deemed as neglect.

In a rugby situation, neglect may occur when:

- 4.2.1 Young players are left alone without proper supervision;
- 4.2.2 A young player is exposed to unnecessary heat or cold without fluids or protection;
- 4.2.3 A young player is exposed to an unacceptable risk of injury.

4.3 PHYSICAL ABUSE

This occurs when individuals, including some young people, deliberately inflict injuries on a child, or knowingly do not prevent such injuries. It includes injuries caused by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or using excessive force. It also occurs when individuals give young people alcohol, or inappropriate drugs, or fails to supervise their access to these substances.

In a rugby situation, physical abuse may occur when:

- 4.3.1** Coaches, managers or helpers expose young players to exercise/training, which disregards the capacity of the players immature and growing body;
- 4.3.2** Coaches, managers or helpers expose young players to overplaying, over training or fatigue;
- 4.3.3** Coaches, managers or helpers expose young players to alcohol, or give them the opportunity to drink alcohol below the legal age;
- 4.3.4** Coaches, managers or helpers expose young players to performance enhancing drugs and recommend that they take them.

4.4 SEXUAL ABUSE

Girls and boys are abused by adults, both male and female, who use young people to meet their own sexual needs. Examples include forcing a child to take part in sexual activity such as sexual intercourse, masturbation, or oral sex. Showing children pornographic material or making suggestions that sexual favours can help (or refusal hinder) a sporting career.

In a rugby situation, sexual abuse may occur when:

- 4.4.1** The close proximity of coaches and others, to young people provides opportunities for potential abusers to exploit their position of trust to sexually abuse.

SECTION 5

POOR PRACTICE

Poor practice includes any behaviour which contravenes any of the following:

- 5.1** RFU Fair Play Codes
- 5.2** RFU/RFUW Coaches' Code of Conduct (see Appendix 3)
- 5.3** RFU/RFUW Equity Policy
- 5.4** RFUW "Good Practice in the Rugby Setting" (see Section 13)
- 5.5** RFU/RFUW Welfare and Procedures Policy for Young People
- 5.6** Accepted responsibilities of all individuals delivering the game to young people

SECTION 6

BULLYING

Bullying is not always easy to define and will not always be an adult abusing a young person. It is often the case that the bully is a young person. There are three main types of bullying:

- 6.1** Physical, e.g. hitting, kicking, theft;
- 6.2** Verbal, e.g. racist or homophobic remarks;
- 6.3** Emotional, e.g. persistent negative feedback.

All of these will include:

- 6.4** Deliberate hostility and aggression towards a victim;
- 6.5** A victim who is weaker and less powerful than the bully or bullies;
- 6.6** An outcome which is always painful and distressing for the individuals.

Bullying behaviour may also include:

- 6.7** Other forms of violence;
- 6.8** Sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing;
- 6.9** Tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation;
- 6.10** Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- 6.11** Unwanted physical contact or abusive, offensive comments of sexual nature. The competitive nature of rugby union makes it a potential environment for the bully. This may manifest itself in some of the following ways:
- 6.12** A parent who pushes too hard;
- 6.13** A coach who adopts a 'win at all costs' philosophy;
- 6.14** A player who intimidates others;
- 6.15** An official who is over officious.

SECTION 7

INDICATORS OF ABUSE OUTSIDE OF THE RUGBY SETTING TO BE AWARE OF

These indicators are not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of them is not proof that the young person is being abused.

7.1 Physical abuse

- 7.1.1** Current unexplained injuries;
- 7.1.2** Inappropriate excuses to explain injury;
- 7.1.3** Untreated injuries;
- 7.1.4** Fear of returning home;
- 7.1.5** Aggression towards others.

7.2 Neglect

- 7.2.1** Constant hunger and tiredness;
- 7.2.2** Poor personal hygiene;

- 7.2.3 Poor state or inappropriate clothing;
- 7.2.4 Frequent lateness or absence from the coaching sessions;
- 7.2.5 Low self-esteem;
- 7.2.6 Poor peer relationships.

7.3 Emotional Abuse

- 7.3.1 Low self-esteem;
- 7.3.2 Decline in concentration levels;
- 7.3.3 Continual self-depreciation;
- 7.3.4 Emotional immaturity;
- 7.3.5 Extremes of behaviour.

7.4 Sexual Abuse

- 7.4.1 Unexplained changes in behaviour;
- 7.4.2 Inappropriate sexual awareness;
- 7.4.3 Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour;
- 7.4.4 Distrust of adults;
- 7.4.5 Inappropriate language.

Sometimes changes in behaviour can relate to other significant events in a young person's life, such as bereavement, internal family difficulties or bullying. Working in partnership with parents/carers and ensuring positive communication will help to ensure that reasons for changes in behaviour can be identified and action taken to support the young person. It is NOT the responsibility of those working in rugby union to decide that abuse is occurring, but it IS their responsibility to act on any concern. (Please refer to Sections 10 and 11).

SECTION 8

LEVELS OF AWARENESS

It is understandable that people, who are well-motivated, loving and caring individuals with a deep commitment to their sport, are reluctant to believe that children may be suffering harm in the rugby environment or at home. It may be difficult to accept that children could be at risk because of the way the organisation is being run and the attitudes of those involved. Levels of awareness need to be raised without creating an atmosphere of anxiety or suspicion. However, a basic principle should be that:

If you become aware of anything which causes you to feel uncomfortable, you should talk to the BRFC Welfare Officer about it.

This means being aware of the attitudes of coaches, volunteers and club members and of the interactions between them and the children, and with each other. Certain modes of behaviour by an individual or individuals may be excused by the comments:

“He/she has always behaved like that”

or

“We’ve come to expect that sort of behaviour and attitude from X club, they are the same every year”. If the behaviour is contrary to BRFC or RFU/RFUW Welfare Policy and Procedures, meaning that young people are potentially at risk, then action MUST be taken. Adults must also be alert to any unusual incidents or activities which take place where coaches, volunteers or Club members are putting themselves in a vulnerable position.

SECTION 9

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In order that the RFU Child Protection Policy is implemented effectively, there has to be a recognition that RFU, Constituent Bodies, member clubs, schools and academies must work together to ensure that young people enjoy rugby union in a safe environment.

9.1 The Role of RFU

- 9.1.1** To produce a Child Protection Policy;
- 9.1.2** To produce an Implementation Plan;
- 9.1.3** To monitor the Child Protection Policy nationally;
- 9.1.4** To manage the implementation of CRB disclosure;
- 9.1.5** To provide support, training and guidance for club and Constituent Body Welfare Managers;
- 9.1.6** To provide training programmes for all adults who have regular contact with young people;
- 9.1.7** To produce relevant resources to support the Child Protection Policy;
- 9.1.8** To make decisions on and record all reported cases;
- 9.1.9** To appoint a disciplinary panel when necessary;
- 9.1.10** To ensure all appropriate individuals and bodies are informed of disciplinary decisions and ensure these are acted upon.

9.2 The Role of the Constituent Body

- 9.2.1** To appoint a Welfare Manager (see Appendix 2 for “Terms of Reference”);
- 9.2.2** To support clubs in the production of a Child Protection Policy;
- 9.2.3** To co-ordinate the management of CRB disclosure;
- 9.2.4** To ensure that all reported cases are managed in line with RFU/RFUW Policy (see Sections 10 and 11);
- 9.2.5** To provide support to clubs in their implementation of RFU/RFUW policies and procedures relating to the welfare of young people.

9.3 The Role of BRFC

- 9.3.1** To appoint a Welfare Officer who will act as the first point of contact for concerns about the welfare of young people (see Appendix 2 for “Terms of Reference”);
- 9.3.2** To accept that all officers and committee members have a responsibility in this area and be prepared to respond to any indication of poor practice or abuse in line with RFU/RFUW Policy (see Sections 9 and 10) and to put in place structures and systems to ensure that this is followed in practice;

9.3.3 To adopt and implement a policy of Best Practice for all adults working with young people (see Section 13, Appendix 3 and RFU Fair Play Codes);

9.3.4 To ensure that all relevant members who have regular supervisory contact with children or a management responsibility for those working with young people undertake a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure;

9.3.5 To identify a disciplinary panel which, where necessary, will be convened to hear cases (see Appendix 1).

SECTION 10

RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE, SUSPICIONS AND ALLEGATIONS

10.1 In all cases of reported poor practice/abuse, the following principles must always be adopted:

Listen and Reassure

DO:

- **Stay calm** - do not rush into inappropriate action. React calmly in order to not 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 a 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 or CB Welfare Officer** - ensuring that you communicate all the information accurately;
- **Maintain confidentiality** - complete the incident report form (see Appendix 7). All incidents will be treated with an "open mind" and be handled in a fair and equitable manner. 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.

DO NOT:

- Panic - or allow your feelings to be evident;
- Make promises you cannot keep - explain that you will need to tell other people;
- Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily;
- Delay;
- Speculate or make assumptions;
- Approach the alleged abuser;
- Take sole responsibility.

In all cases, if you are not sure what to do, you can gain help from the NSPCC 24-hour freephone helpline (0800 800 500) or the RFU Child Protection Line (0208 831 6655).

10.2 RECORD (see Appendix 7)

Information passed to external agencies must be as helpful as possible. It will be necessary to make a detailed report at the time of disclosure. The report should contain the following detail:

- 10.2.1** The young person's name, address, date of birth, race, ethnic origin, and any disability they may have;
- 10.2.2** Nature of the allegation;
- 10.2.3** A description of any injuries/bruising;
- 10.2.4** Any observations about the behaviour/emotional state of the young person;
- 10.2.5** Times, locations, dates;
- 10.2.6** The young person's account in their own words of what has happened;
- 10.2.7** Actions that have been taken as a result of your concerns;
- 10.2.8** Whether the person writing the report is expressing their own concerns or those of a third party;
- 10.2.9** Sign and date;
- 10.2.10** Keep a copy;
- 10.2.11** Keep a record of the name and designation of a Social Services member of staff or police officer to whom concerns were passed.

DO NOT INVESTIGATE YOURSELF.

SECTION 11

TAKING APPROPRIATE ACTION

11 Concerns about poor practice and possible abuse within the rugby setting

This would relate to anyone working with young people in a paid or voluntary capacity, e.g. volunteer coaches in clubs, club helpers, tutors on training camps and coaches. Child abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. Although it is a sensitive and difficult issue, child abuse has occurred within institutions and within other settings, e.g. sport or other social activities. Recent research indicates that abuse that takes place within an organisation is rarely a one-off event. It is crucial that those involved in rugby union are aware of this possibility and that all allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action pursued. Allegations will often relate to poor practice where an adult's behaviour is inappropriate and maybe causing concern to a young person/s, colleague/s or parent/s.

Poor practice constitutes any behaviour that contravenes RFU Codes of Conduct (Appendix 3) and codes of Good Practice in the Rugby Setting (Section 13), and in particular:

- *Infringes on an individual's rights;*
- *Is a failure to fulfil the highest standards of care.*

Poor practice is unacceptable in rugby union and will be treated seriously. Appropriate action in line with RFU regulations will always be taken.

11.1 Action to take if a young person informs you that he/she is concerned about someone's behaviour towards them in the rugby setting.

- Follow principles laid down in Sections 10.1 and 10.2.

Follow the RFU procedures as laid down below:

11.1.1 Make a full record of what has been said, heard and seen as soon as possible;

11.1.2 Club Welfare Officer to be informed immediately;

11.1.3 Club Welfare Officer should report the matter to the RFU Ethics and Equity Manager, with copy to the CB Welfare Manager.

Following guidance that the issue is poor practice, then the Club Welfare Officer should:

Follow club disciplinary procedures for a first report of poor practice (see Appendix 1):

11.1.4 Forward a written report on action taken to the CB Welfare Manager and RFU Ethics and Equity Manager;

11.1.5 If an individual is identified by the club as being guilty of poor practice on subsequent occasions, then the CB Welfare Manager, in consultation with the RFU Ethics and Equity Manager, may conclude that the issue constitutes abuse and should be referred to the RFU Disciplinary Officer.

Following guidance that the issue is abuse, then the Club Welfare Officer should:

11.1.6 If the young person requires immediate medical attention:

- An ambulance must be called;
- The doctor should be informed that the concern relates to child protection;

11.1.7 Refer the allegation to police or Social Services They will give advice relating to the contacting of parents/guardians;

11.1.8 Inform the CB Welfare Officer and the RFU Ethics and Equity Manager and forward a written report utilising the Incident Report Form (see Appendix 7).

Non-action is not an option. The welfare of the young person/s is paramount.

11.1.9 The RFU Ethics and Equity Manager, in consultation with the RFU Disciplinary Officer, will:

- Decide whether any individual accused of abuse should temporarily be suspended pending further Social Services or police enquiries (see Appendix 1);
- Assess all individual cases under the appropriate misconduct and disciplinary procedures irrespective of the findings of the Social Services and police. There may be three types of investigation:

- Criminal
- Child protection
- Disciplinary or misconduct

- Seek advice from the RFU Communications department as to developing a media strategy (see Appendix 9);
- Support the respective Club and CB Welfare Officers in all aspects, particularly the need to obtain appropriate support for affected young people, parents/carers and members of staff;
- Where allegations are unfounded, the RFU will work in a professional manner to ensure that the person concerned is given appropriate support to continue his or her work in rugby.

11.2 Action to take if you become aware, through your own observations or through a third party of possible abuse occurring at a young person's home or in some other setting outside of rugby.

If this happens, you should:

- Ensure the safety of the young person - if he/she requires immediate treatment, call an ambulance, inform the doctors of your concerns and ensure they are aware that this is a child protection issue. RFU procedures should then be followed:

11.2.1 Please refer to Sections 10.1 and 10.2 of this policy;

11.2.2 Report your concerns to the Club Welfare Officer;

11.2.3 The Club Welfare Officer may seek advice from the RFU Ethics and Equity Manager, the CB Welfare Manager, the RFU Child Protection Helpline or the NSPCC. If there is any delay in receiving advice, contact must be made with Social Services;

11.2.4 If a formal referral is made, make it clear to Social Services or the police that this is a child protection referral;

11.2.5 All police forces have dedicated Child Protection Teams (CPTs) which deal with allegations of abuse within the family setting and by people in a position of trust. In a real emergency, dial 999;

11.2.6 Parents/carers should only be contacted following advice from Social Services.

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

11.3 In all cases, always remember the following:

- It is often more difficult for some young people to disclose abuse than others. Young people from ethnic minorities may have regularly experienced racism, which may lead them to believe that certain groups, including those in authority roles, do not really care about their well being. They may well feel they have good reason to question whether the response may be different;

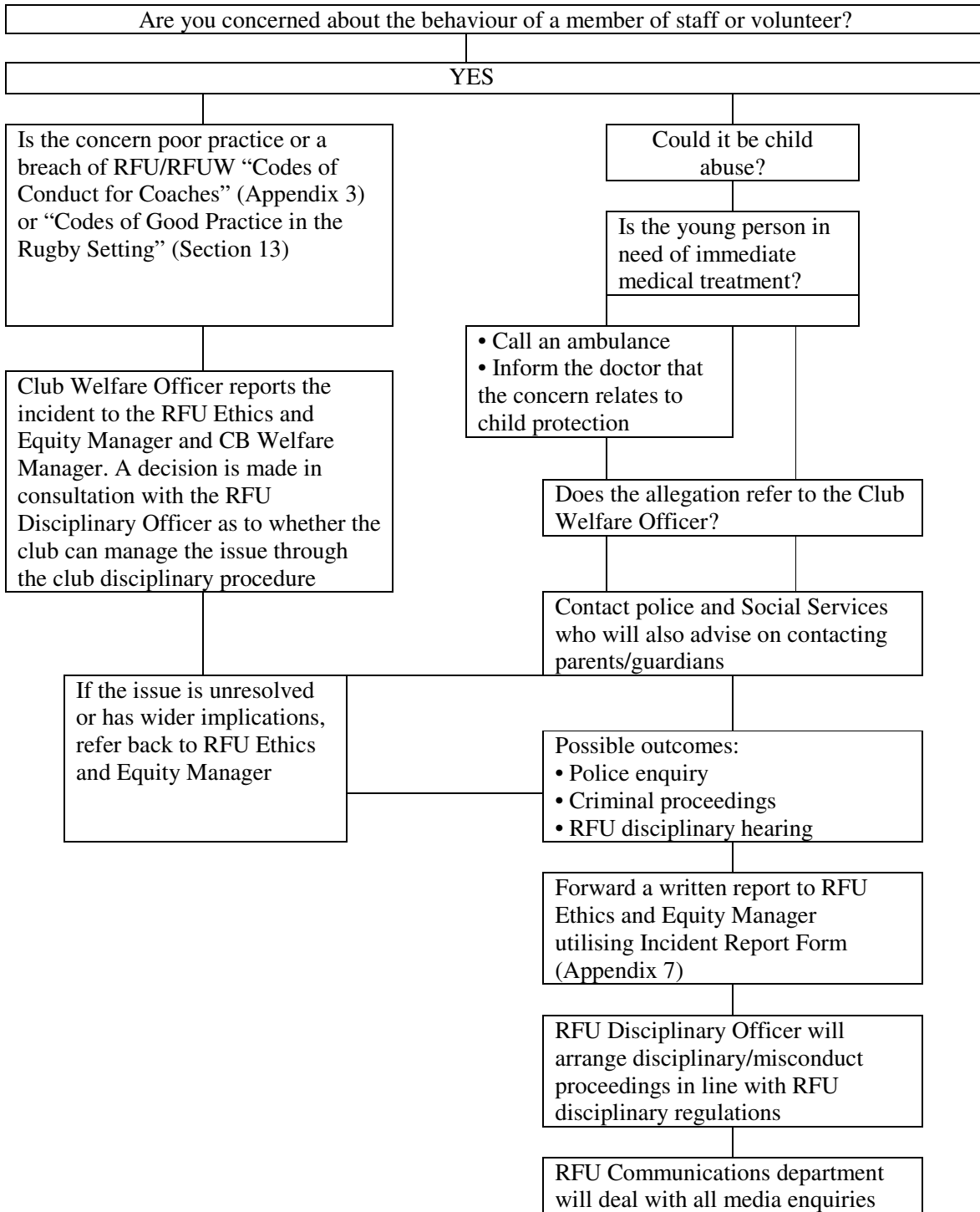
- Disabled young people may have to overcome additional barriers before feeling that that they can disclose abuse. They may rely on the abuser for their daily care and not know of alternative sources of care. The abuse may be the only attention/affection they have experienced. There may be communication 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 a non-disabled 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.

11.4 In all cases, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis. This will include the following people:

- The Club/CB Welfare Officers;
- Designated officers within the RFU;
- The person making the allegation;
- Social Services and police;
- The parents of the young person alleged to have been abused.

**DEALING WITH CONCERNS, DISCLOSURE
OR ALLEGATIONS ABOUT STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS
WITHIN RUGBY UNION**



DEALING WITH POSSIBLE ABUSE OCCURRING OUTSIDE OF THE RUGBY SETTING

Are you concerned about abuse by a person outside the rugby setting?

Yes

Is the young person is in need of immediate medical attention?

Yes

No

- Call an ambulance
- Inform the doctor that the concern relates to child protection

SECTION 12

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STAFF, COACHES AND VOLUNTEERS

Anyone may have the potential to abuse young people in some way and it is important that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. It is essential the same procedure is used consistently throughout the game. Under the Protection of Children Act 1999, all individuals working on behalf of BRFC are treated as employees whether paid or volunteers. The following recruitment checks must be carried out:

12.1 Advertising. If any form of advertising is used to recruit staff, it should reflect:

12.1.1 The responsibilities of the role;

12.1.2 The level of experience or qualification required (e.g. working with children an advantage);

12.1.3 RFU and BRFC stance on child protection.

12.2 Applications

12.2.1 All adults who are in contact with young people, whether paid or voluntary, should complete an application form (see Appendix 6).

12.3 Checks and References

12.3.1 All adults who have “**regular supervisory contact with young people**” will undertake CRB disclosure. These adults will include:

- Professional staff;
- All coaches/assistant coaches;
- Heads of mini/midi rugby sections;
- Heads of youth rugby sections;
- Team managers;
- All referees who manage mini/midi and youth games;
- Welfare Officers;
- Physiotherapists.

12.3.2 A minimum of two written references should be taken up and at least one should be associated with former work with young people. If an applicant has no experience of working with children, training is strongly advised.

12.4 Interview and Induction

- Where appropriate, all professional appointments for full or part time positions, should undergo a formal interview;
- All staff (paid or voluntary) must undergo a formal or informal induction in which:
- Coaching qualifications, if applicable, are verified;
- Training needs are identified;
- Appropriate Codes of Conduct and Codes of Good Practice are signed up to;
- The roles, responsibilities and expectations of the job are clarified;
- Child Protection procedures are explained and training needs established.

12.5 Training

Appropriate training will enable individuals to recognise their responsibilities with regard to their own good practice and the reporting of poor practice or concerns of possible abuse. The BRFC require:

12.5.1 All adults who have regular contact with young people complete the “RFU Guide to Best Practice and Child Protection”;

12.5.2 All adults who have a coaching responsibility for young people attend an appropriate RFU coaching course.

It is vital that all staff working with young people in rugby union are conversant with:

- Player-centred coaching techniques;
- How to work with young people safely and effectively.

12.6 Monitoring and Appraisal

All staff and volunteers should at regular intervals be given the opportunity to receive formal or informal feedback. This will enable managers to:

- Identify training needs;
- Set new goals;

- Highlight concerns about inappropriate behaviour.

SECTION 13

GOOD PRACTICE IN THE RUGBY SETTING

It is the aim of BRFC that all young people enjoy the game in a safe enjoyable setting. BRFC is equally aware of the need to ensure that all individuals who provide young people with the opportunity to play, are aware of their responsibilities.

The following section sets out good practice procedures which all those involved in the delivery of rugby union to young people should adhere to.

13.1 Good Practice Procedures. In order to ensure that the game is enjoyed by everyone and that all young people are safe and all adults are aware of their responsibilities when working with young people, BRFC has adopted the following good practice guidance:

13.1.1 There is a club welfare policy with an implementation and monitoring programme;

13.1.2 A Club Welfare Officer is appointed with representation on the club committee;

13.1.3 The Child Protection Policy is publicised to show the organisation's commitment to providing a safe environment;

13.1.4 Procedures are in place to deal with complaints or concerns;

13.1.5 Training opportunities are provided for adults who work with young people;

13.1.6 Codes of Conduct and Codes of Practice are in place and that all coaches sign up to the relevant codes;

13.1.7 Parents/carers are to be made aware of what the organisation and coaches are doing and also of the correct procedures to express any concerns they may have;

13.1.8 BRFC has an Equity Policy and that all discrimination is challenged and prohibited;

13.1.9 All adults who regularly supervise young people undertake a CRB disclosure (see Section 12.3.1);

13.1.10 Guidelines are in place to control and monitor the use of photographic images of children (see Appendix 8);

13.1.11 Develop and promote a policy on bullying (see Appendix 5);

13.1.12 Monitors coaches and provide them with feedback with particular reference to poor practice.

13.2 Codes of Good Practice for Coaches and Officials. Codes of Conduct will ensure that all youngsters and the individuals who work with them will enjoy the game in safe environment. When working with young people, coaches and officials must adopt the following guidance:

13.2.1 Always be publicly open when working with young people. Avoid situations where you and an individual child are completely unobserved;

13.2.2 Rugby is a physical game. Situations will occur when, in order to teach or coach certain techniques, it is necessary to make contact with the player. However, the following must apply:

- **Parents and young players must be made aware of situations in which this may happen when they join the club;**
- **Physical handling should only be used for safety reasons or where there is no other way of coaching the technique.**

13.2.3 Contact or touching which is inappropriate (not directly related to the coaching context) or aggressive, will not be tolerated;

13.2.4 If groups are to be supervised in changing rooms, always ensure that individuals work in pairs, and that gender is appropriate. Ideally, young people should not have to change at the same time or in the same place as adults;

13.2.5 Where mixed teams compete away from home, they should always be accompanied by at least one male and one female adult;

13.2.6 Volunteers and professionals must respect the rights and dignity and worth of all, and treat everyone with equality;

13.2.7 Coaches must place the well being and safety of the player above the development of performance. Coaches should:

- Avoid overplaying of players (particularly talented players). All players need and deserve equal opportunity to play;
- Remember that young people play for fun and enjoyment and that winning is only a part of it;
- Motivate youngsters through positive feedback and constructive criticism;
- Ensure that contact skills are taught in a safe, secure manner, paying due regard to the physical development of young players;
- Never allow young players to train/play when injured;
- Ensure equipment and facilities are safe and appropriate to the age and ability of the players.

13.2.8 Coaches should hold current RFU coaching awards or a recognised award;

13.2.9 Coaches should keep up to date with knowledge and technical skills and should be aware of their own limitations. Coaches should only work within the limitations of their knowledge and qualifications;

13.2.10 Coaches must ensure that the activities which they direct or advocate are appropriate to the age, maturity and ability of the players.

13.2.11 Coaches should always promote the positive aspects of their sport (e.g. fair play), and never condone law violations or use of prohibited substances;

13.2.12 Coaches must consistently display high standards of personal behaviour and appearance;

13.2.13 Coaches should never overtly criticise players or use language or actions which may cause the player to lose self-esteem or confidence;

13.2.14 Young people should not be allowed to drink alcohol or encouraged to drink alcohol if they are under the legal age to do so.

Practice to be avoided

Everyone should also be aware that, as a general rule, it does not make sense for a coach to:

- Spend amounts of time alone with children away from others;
- Take children alone on car journeys, however short.

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 and/or a person with parental responsibility for the player.

If you accidentally hurt a player, or cause distress in any manner, or the player appears to respond in a sexual manner to your actions, or misunderstands, or misinterprets something you have done, report the incident to a colleague supported by a written report of the incident as soon as possible. Parents/carers should also be informed of the occurrence.

13.3 Practice that is prohibited by BRFC

Individuals should never:

13.3.1 Take young people to their home or other secluded places where they will be alone;

13.3.2 Engage in rough, physical games, sexually provocative games or horseplay with young people;

13.3.3 Take part in any dynamic 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 and well being of the young players;

13.3.4 Share a room with a young person unless the individual is the parent/guardian of that young person;

13.3.5 Allow any form of inappropriate touching (not specifically related to the coaching of the game);

13.3.6 Make sexually suggestive remarks to a young person, even in fun;

13.3.7 Use inappropriate language or allow young players to use inappropriate language unchallenged;

13.3.8 Allow allegations by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon;

13.3.9 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, etc.);*

13.3.10 Depart the rugby club until the safe dispersal of all young people is complete;

13.3.11 Cause an individual to lose self-esteem by embarrassing, humiliating or undermining him/her;

13.3.12 Treat some young people more favourably than others;

13.3.13 Agree to meet a young person on your own on a one-to-one basis.

13.4 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 role. In rugby union, most adults in a position of trust recognise that there are certain boundaries in the coach/player relationship which must not be crossed. The relationship is no different to that between a school teacher and the pupils in their care.

RFU Code of Conduct on the Abuse of Trust

13.4.1 Any behaviour, which encourages a physical or emotionally dependant relationship to develop between the person in a position of trust and the young person in their care must be avoided;

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

13.4.3 Allegations relating to a breach of the Code of Conduct will be investigated according to RFU disciplinary procedures.

13.5 WHISTLE BLOWING. Any adult or young person who has concerns can contact the RFU/RFUW in complete confidence on 0208 831 6655 or via childprotection@therfu.com

SECTION 14

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

BRFC Welfare officer

Julie Fisher
Telephone: 01202 581933
Email: juliebass1@aol.com

D&W (CB) Welfare Officer

Dave Harris
Telephone: 01305 854337
Email: davidandkaren@rosie76.fsnet.co.uk

RFU Ethics and Equity Manager

Steve Farr
Telephone: 0208 831 7479
Email: stevfarr@rfu.com

RFUW Child Protection Lead Officer

Helen Ames
Telephone: 0208 831 7996
Email: helenames@rfu.com

The RFU Helpline

Telephone: 0208 831 6655
Email: childprotection@therfu.com

NSPCC Helpline

Telephone: 0808 800 5000
Web: www.nspcc.org.uk

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)

3 Gilmour Close, Beaumont Leys, Leicester
LE4 1EZ
Telephone: 0116 234 7278
Web: www.thecpsu.org.uk

APPENDIX 1

BRFC Procedures to Manage Cases of Poor Practice

Poor practice is defined as any behaviour which contravenes RFU Codes of Conduct (Fair Play Codes) or RFU Guidance for Good Practice.

- 1.** Once an incident is reported to the Club Welfare Officer, he/she should consult with the RFU Ethics and Equity Manager in order to ascertain whether the allegation is poor practice, bullying or abuse;
- 2.** Once the incident has been identified as poor practice and, in consultation with senior club officials (Club Chairman/Youth Chairman), a decision will be made whether or not to suspend, temporarily, the person accused. Each case will be considered on its merits;
- 3.** A disciplinary hearing may be called. The panel should be made up of three club members with regard to the following criteria:
 - No person who has been involved in bringing the case to the disciplinary hearing should sit on the panel;
 - Senior management of the club must be represented;
 - If the case relates to poor coaching practice experience in this field must be represented.
- 4.** The accused will be advised of receipt of the report and provided with copies;
- 5.** The accused will be invited to attend the hearing, which must be held at a convenient time for him/her;
- 6.** The accused must be given sufficient advanced notice;
- 7.** The accused must be given the opportunity to offer his/her side of the story and call witnesses;
- 8.** Once the disciplinary panel reaches a decision it should be communicated to the accused and confirmed in writing;
- 9.** A copy of the finding should be sent to the CB Welfare Officer and RFU Ethics and Equity Manager.

Power of the Club Disciplinary Panel

- 1.** Temporary suspension;
- 2.** Person may only coach whilst supervised;
- 3.** Coach must undertake RFU Best Practice and Child Protection course;
- 4.** Coach must attend ScUk 'Good Practice and Child Protection' course;
- 5.** Coach must attend appropriate RFU coaching course.

APPENDIX 2

Terms of Reference for Club Welfare Officer

- 1.** Ensure the club has a Child Protection Policy and Implementation Plan;
- 2.** Ensure Codes of Conduct are well publicised and adhered to;
- 3.** In consultation with the CB Welfare Officer, ensure all reported incidents are managed at the appropriate level in line with RFU procedures;
- 4.** Ensure all relevant club members are aware of training opportunities;
- 5.** Ensure all parents are aware of the club policy on child protection and the correct protocols for voicing concerns;
- 6.** Be aware of local Social Services and Area Child Protection Committee contacts;
- 7.** Sit on relevant club committees.

Terms of Reference for Constituent Body Welfare Manager

- 1.** Support clubs to produce a Child Protection Policy;
- 2.** Monitor club implementation of Child Protection Policies within the CB;
- 3.** In consultation with the RFU Ethics and Equity Manager, advise on the management of all reported cases (in line with RFU procedures) and ensure that all cases are reported to the RFU;
- 4.** In consultation with the RFU Ethics and Equity Manager, plan the implementation of CRB disclosure within the CB;
- 5.** Establish contact with Social Services and Area Child Protection Committees;
- 6.** Have a formal role on relevant committees within the CB.

APPENDIX 3

Coaches' Code of Conduct

- 1.** All rugby coaches must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every young person with whom they work with and treat them equally within the context of rugby union;
- 2.** All rugby coaches must place the physical and emotional well being of all young players above all other considerations, including the development of performance;
- 3.** The relationship that a rugby coach develops with the players with whom they work must be based on mutual trust and respect;
- 4.** All rugby coaches must ensure that all activities undertaken are appropriate to the age, maturity, experience and ability of the young players;
- 5.** All rugby coaches must encourage young players to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance;
- 6.** All rugby coaches should clarify with the young players (and their parents/carers) what is expected of them both on and off the rugby field and also what they are entitled to expect from the coach;
- 7.** All rugby coaches should work in partnership with others within the game (officials, doctors, physiotherapists, sports scientists) to ensure the well being, safety and enjoyment of all young players;
- 8.** All rugby coaches must promote the positive aspects of the sport, e.g. fair play. Violations of the Laws of the Game, behaviour contrary to the spirit of the Laws of the Game or relevant regulations or the use of prohibited techniques or substances must never be condoned.

APPENDIX 4

Good Practice Guidance for Match Officials

When refereeing young players, match officials should:

- Recognise the importance of fun and enjoyment when officiating 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.

Officials should not:

- Change in the same area as young players;
- Shower with young players - agree a timetable with the coaches;
- Be alone with young players at any time - if a young player comes into the dressing room, ensure another adult is present;
- Check studs without the coach being present;
- Administer first aid;
- Allow a young player to continue playing if there are doubts about their fitness;
- Tolerate bad language from young players;
- Engage in any inappropriate contact with young players;
- Give a lift to a player unless there are other young people or adults in the car and the parents are aware;
- Take a young player to your home;
- Overtly criticise young players or use language which may cause the player to lose confidence or self-esteem;
- Make sexually explicit remarks to young players, even in fun.

Officials must always:

- Report, in writing, to the Club or CB Welfare Officer and/or Society Secretary, behaviour by adults which you feel contravenes RFU Child Protection Policy:
 - Verbal bullying by coaches/parents/spectators;
 - Physical abuse by coaches/parents/spectators;
 - Inappropriate or aggressive contact by an adult to a young person;
 - Verbal abuse directed at the official by young people or adults.

REMEMBER: The welfare of all young people is paramount.

APPENDIX 5

Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying is not easy to define, can take many forms and is usually repeated over a period of time. The three main types of bullying are: physical (e.g. hitting, kicking), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from activities).

They will all include:

- Deliberate hostility and aggression towards the victim;
- A victim who is weaker than the bully or bullies;
- An outcome which is always painful and distressing for the victim.

Bullying behaviour may also include:

- Other forms of violence;
- Sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing or theft;
- Tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation;
- Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- Unwanted physical contact or abusive or offensive comment of a sexual nature.

Emotional and verbal bullying is more likely to be found in rugby than physical violence. It is also difficult to cope with or prove. BRFC expects all members, coaches, players, volunteers and parents to subscribe to and accept the Club's anti-bullying policy.

BRFC is prepared to:

- Take the problem seriously;
- Investigate any incidents;
- Talk to the bullies and victims separately.

Decide on appropriate action, such as:

- Obtain apology from the bully(ies) to the victim;
- Inform parents of the bully(ies);
- Insist on the return of items 'borrowed' or stolen;
- Insist bullies compensate the victim;
- Hold club discussions about bullying;
- Provide support for the coach of the victim.

APPENDIX 6

APPLICATION & REFERENCE FORMS

To follow

APPENDIX 7

INCIDENT REPORT FORM

To follow

APPENDIX 8

Photographic Images - RFU Guidelines

While BRFC recognises that publicity and pictures of young people enjoying rugby are essential to promote the sport and a healthy lifestyle, the following rules should be observed:

- 1.** Ensure parents/guardians/young people have granted their consent for the taking and publication of photographic images and have signed and returned the Parent/Guardian and Young Person Permission Form;
- 2.** All young people must be appropriately dressed for the activity taking place;
- 3.** Photography or recording should focus on the activity rather than a particular young person and personal details which might make a young person vulnerable, such as their exact address, should never be revealed;
- 4.** Where an individual has achieved success in the game (e.g. when selected for representative side or showing triumph over adversity), permission must be gained from a parent/guardian and the young person to use photographs/recordings and relevant details;
- 5.** Where possible, to reflect the RFU/RFUW Equity Policy, photographs/recordings should represent the diverse range of young people participating in rugby;
- 6.** Anyone taking photographs or recording at any rugby event must have a valid reason for doing so and seek the permission of the organisers/persons in charge;
- 7.** They should make themselves known to the event organisers/persons in charge and be able to identify themselves if requested during the course of the event;
- 8.** All concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography should be reported in confidence to the RFU Equity and Ethics Manager via the Club or Constituent Body Welfare Manager.

Introduction

The RFU/RFUW's Best Practice Guidelines have been developed to provide clubs, schools and Constituent Bodies with advice and guidance on the use of images of young people. It is recommended that this is adopted by clubs and Constituent Bodies and the 'Eight Golden Rules' made available to as many people as possible. The whole policy document should be kept by the organisation's administrators for future reference. Any change to these guidelines will be notified via the RFU/RFUW's website and in any relevant publications. Please remember that the safety and enjoyment of young people should be paramount in all your activities and this has been designed to help you in this. The RFU/RFUW is committed to providing a safe and enjoyable environment for young people under the age of 18. Implicit in this is the commitment to ensure that all publications, resources and media represent participants appropriately and with due respect. By adopting the points outlined in these guidelines, you will be putting in place the

best possible practice to protect young people wherever photographs or recorded images are taken and stored.

Key Concerns

The key concerns contained within this policy regarding the use of images of young people relate to:

- The taking of inappropriate photographs or recorded images of young people;
- The possible identification of young people when a photograph is accompanied by inappropriate information;
- The inappropriate use, adaptation or copying of images for use on child pornography websites.

Recording Images of Young People

There have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to young people through the use of photographs on sport websites and other publications. Therefore, the following guidelines should be followed:

- All young people featured in photographs/recordings must be appropriately dressed with outer clothing garments covering their torso from at least the bottom of their neck to their thighs (i.e. a minimum of vest/shirt and shorts);
- The photograph/recording should ideally focus on the activity. Where possible, images of children/young people should be recorded in small groups (the group may comprise any combination of adults and children);
- Clubs' or organisations' coaches and teachers should still be allowed to use video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid and means of recording special occasions. However, care should be taken in the dissemination and storage of the material.

Publishing Images of Young People

- If a photograph/recording is used, personal details of young people such as email address, home address and telephone numbers should never be revealed;
- Ask for parental/guardian permission to use an image of a young person. This ensures that parents/carers are aware of the way the image of their child is representing the sport. A Parent/Guardian and Child Permission Form is the best way of achieving this and can be done at the beginning of the season;
- Ask for the young person's permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport. A Parent/Guardian and Young Person Permission Form is the best way of achieving this and can be done at the beginning of the season;

- Where a story concerns an individual (e.g. their selection for representative side, triumph over adversity), particular attention should be paid to ensuring permission is gained from a parent/guardian and the young person to use a photograph/recording and relevant details;
- In order to guard against the possibility of a young person under a court order appearing on a website, the simultaneous streaming of images onto a website is not recommended. Delayed streaming also provides an opportunity for the editing of inappropriate clips (e.g. disarranged clothing). If video/film clips are delivered from your own server, that material can be downloaded. It is therefore recommended that you use an independent server so that material cannot be accessed, copied or downloaded;
- Think about the level of consideration that you give to the use of images in all publications, e.g. the processes used in choosing photographs for a publicity brochure for the club. Apply an increased level of consideration to the images of youngsters used on websites. Simple technology features such as watermarking may dissuade third parties from using or attempting to access controlled imagery.
- Try to take photographs that represent the diverse range of youngsters participating safely in rugby. This might include:
 - Boys and girls;
 - Young people from minority ethnic communities;
 - A range of clothing, e.g. tracksuit/jogging trousers;
 - Girls with hair covered - baseball cap will do;
 - Disabled people;
 - Glasses - okay if not actually playing at the time;
 - Shin pads must be on if they are recorded playing;
 - Jewellery should be off in all images.

Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment by the Media at Rugby Events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people. While this might be rare in rugby, all those involved have a duty of care to young people to ensure that this risk is as small as possible. By taking some simple steps, risks will be reduced. If professional photographers are commissioned or the press is invited to a rugby activity or event, it is important to ensure they are clear about expectations of them in relation to the welfare of young people:

- The photographer/camera person must have bona fide identification and be able to produce it on request. They must also sign the Event Registration Form;
- Participants and parents must be informed that a photographer/camera person will be in attendance at an event and ensure that they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs;
- Do not allow unsupervised access to rugby players or one-to-one photo sessions at events;
- Do not approve/allow photo sessions outside the event or at a rugby player's home.

Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment by Parents and Spectators

If parents or other spectators are intending to photograph or video at an event they should also be made aware the expectations:

- Parents and spectators should be prepared to identify themselves, if requested, and state their purpose for photography/filming.

In addition:

- Participants and parents should be informed that if they have concerns about inappropriate or intrusive photography/filming, these should be reported to the event organiser or official and recorded in the same manner as any other child protection concern;
- Event organisers should approach and challenge any person taking photographs who has not made his/herself known and/or registered with them. They might need to refer it to the local police force if this person continues to record images unauthorised.

Summary

Protecting the welfare of young people is about putting in place the best possible practices and procedures; this will protect not only young people but also the adults in rugby.

APPENDIX 9

Dealing with Media Enquiries

1. Why do you need a media strategy?

Child abuse is an issue which will quite correctly generate media interest. The RFU has developed a comprehensive training and certification programme for those working with young people in rugby. It is, however, imperative that each club/school has an effective strategy for dealing with media enquiries. The RFU now has a regional media team who can help you deal with media enquiries. However, it is important that you handle initial enquiries in a way that will not aggravate the situation or generate negative publicity. It is also important to be aware of legislation that prevents the naming of children and young people in the media. The RFU is committed to investigating all allegations, but the potential damage the publication of false allegations can do to an individual or club should not be underestimated.

2. Be prepared

- Each Constituent Body/club/school should have a Press Officer or representative to handle media enquiries;
- If you know of an allegation of child abuse, it is important to be prepared in advance for potential publicity;
- Contact the relevant RFU Regional Press Officer (RPO) for your area or the Regional Media Manager and give them ALL the facts;
- Don't hide anything or pretend the situation is not as serious as it is or might become. The press can put a large headline on even the smallest story and it is important that the RPO is aware of all the details.

3. Who do I contact?

Julia Hutton South West Regional Press Officer

Mob: 07971 474557

Email: juliahutton@rfu.com

4. What do I do when approached or contacted by a journalist?

- A journalist may hear of an alleged case of abuse from a source or directly from a relative or acquaintance of the alleged victim;
- They are likely to approach the Constituent Body/club/school or coach/official and ask for their response. It is worth remembering that the journalist may already have the story mapped out in his/her own mind, so what you say, and how you say it, is important;
- Make sure you clearly hear the name of the journalist and the media they are working for. If necessary, ask them to repeat it and write it down;
- Make sure you fully understand what the journalist is asking you. Ask them to repeat a question if necessary. You may be aware of the incident concerned but not always;
- Do not say 'No comment' - it makes you sound guarded and as if you have something to hide;

- Take a contact phone number where they can be easily contacted and find out when their deadline is;
- Contact the Regional Press Officer for your area and discuss the matter;
- The RPO will contact Steve Farr, the RFU's Ethics and Equity Manager, to formulate an appropriate response;
- The RPO will then respond to the journalist and inform you of that response.

5. The follow-up

Allegations of child abuse are rarely one-day stories, so be prepared for more phone calls and media enquiries. Just because one response has been given does not mean that the media will not have more questions in the future.

Follow the same procedure as before and contact your Regional Press Officer.

Contact the relevant RFU Regional Press Officer (RPO)
The RPO will contact Steve Farr, the RFU's Ethics and Equity Manager.

Keep the RPO informed of any developments if you know about a serious allegation of child abuse or if you are contacted by a journalist regarding a serious allegation of child abuse. The RPO will then have a response in case of media enquiries.

The RPO will contact you and the journalist with comment.

Take journalist's name, the media they work for and phone number.