



SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCESS

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DEVON RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

Safeguarding Policy and Process

1. Introduction

Devon RFU Constituent Body (CB) is committed to ensuring the welfare and safety of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults involved in rugby. This policy outlines our commitment to safeguarding practices and provides guidance on how to recognise, prevent, and respond to safeguarding concerns.

This policy is based on the Rugby Football Union's (RFU) safeguarding policy, procedures & Regulation 21 and complies with the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004, and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults from harm.
- Provide all volunteers within the CB with guidance on recognising safeguarding issues.
- Establish clear protocols for reporting and managing safeguarding concerns.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all players, coaches, volunteers, members, parents/carers and anyone involved with Devon RFU. It encompasses all activities, including training, matches, and social events where children, young people or vulnerable adults are present.

Safeguarding Principles

4. Commitment to Safeguarding

Devon RFU CB is committed to:

- Ensuring that all rugby activities are conducted in a safe, positive, and inclusive environment.
- Promoting the welfare and rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Taking action against any behaviour that may be harmful or discriminatory.

5. Key Principles

Our safeguarding approach is grounded in the following principles:

- **Welfare First:** The welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- **Equality:** Everyone has the right to be treated equally, with respect, and without discrimination.
- **Empowerment:** Involving young people in decisions that affect them, providing clear and accessible information.
- **Accountability:** Ensuring that all volunteers are clear on their safeguarding responsibilities.

6. Definitions

- **Child/Young Person:** An individual under 18 years of age.
- **Vulnerable Adult:** An adult who may be unable to protect themselves due to disability, mental health issues, age, or illness.
- **Safeguarding:** Protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- **Abuse:** Includes physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect, as well as exploitation or bullying.

Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

7. Devon RFU Constituent Body Safeguarding Manger (CBSM)

- Devon RFU will appoint a Safeguarding Manager (CBSM) responsible for overseeing safeguarding practices.
- The CBSM will be the main point of contact for all safeguarding issues and concerns, providing advice and ensuring appropriate action is taken.

8. Responsibilities of anyone involved within Devon RFU

- **Awareness:** All individuals should be aware of safeguarding policies, signs of abuse, and how to report concerns.
- **Training:** Coaches and relevant volunteers must complete regular safeguarding training, including updates on any changes in legislation or RFU policies/regulations.
- **Compliance:** Adhere to the RFU Code of Conduct, ensuring that their behaviour is appropriate and that they act in the best interests of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

9. Safe Recruitment Practices

We will follow safe recruitment practices to ensure that all volunteers are suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults:

- **DBS Checks:** Conduct enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all individuals who work directly with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- **References:** Obtain at least two references, including, where possible, one from a previous role working with children or vulnerable adults.
- **Interviews:** Conduct interviews for those working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults that assess suitability, values, and awareness of safeguarding issues.

10. Safeguarding Procedures

10.1 Recognizing Abuse

All volunteers should be familiar with the signs of abuse, which may include:

- **Physical:** Unexplained injuries, frequent absences, or fearfulness.
- **Emotional:** Low self-esteem, withdrawal, or extreme behaviours.
- **Sexual:** Inappropriate knowledge, distress, or secrecy.
- **Neglect:** Poor hygiene, lack of supervision, or malnutrition.

10.2 Responding to Concerns

If a safeguarding concern arises:

1. **Listen:** Take the individual seriously; do not promise confidentiality.
2. **Record:** Document the concern in writing as soon as possible.
3. **Report:** Notify the CBSM immediately. The CBSM will then assess the concern and take appropriate action, following RFU protocols.

10.3 Reporting a Safeguarding Concern

- If a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, contact the police on 999.
- For non-emergency concerns, report to the CBSM, who will liaise with the RFU Safeguarding team and, if necessary, with local safeguarding authorities.

10.4 Managing Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

- Allegations against volunteers should be reported to the CBSM.
- The CBSM will follow RFU procedures and coordinate with relevant authorities to ensure a thorough and fair investigation.

- Any individual accused of abuse may be suspended during the investigation, pending the outcome.

10.5 Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

- All records of safeguarding concerns and incidents should be stored securely, with access limited to the CBSM, Chair and Secretary of Devon RFU.
- Information should only be shared on a need-to-know basis in line with data protection laws.

11. Safer Environments

11.1 Codes of Conduct

All coaches, volunteers, and players must adhere to the RFU Code of Conduct, which promotes respect, inclusion, and sportsmanship.

11.2 Supervision and Ratios

To ensure safe supervision:

- Maintain appropriate adult-to-child ratios during training and matches.
- Ensure that no child is left unsupervised with only one adult.

11.3 Risk Assessments

Risk assessments should be conducted for all activities involving children and young people, particularly travel, training sessions, and social events, to identify and mitigate potential risks.

12. Review and Monitoring

The safeguarding policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or RFU policies change. Feedback from children young people, parents/carers, and CB volunteers will inform updates to ensure best practices.

Contact Information:

- **Devon RFU CB Safeguarding Manager:** CBSM Name
 - email: safeguarding@devonrfu.com and phone:
- **RFU Safeguarding Team:** safeguarding@rfu.com
- **Childline:** 0800 1111

Incident Report Form: [Safeguarding-Referral-Form.pdf](#)

Links

- RFU Safeguarding Policy: [safeguardingpolicybooklet.pdf](#)
- Regulation 21: [Regulation 21 – Safeguarding | Rugby Football Union](#)
- Code of Conduct: <https://rfu.widen.net/s/7xrm8plgrs/code-of-conduct---official-posters>

- RFU Information: [Safeguarding | Rugby Football Union](#)

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