Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy



Wells RFC

Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy

Purpose

It is the aim of Wells RFC to ensure that the practices and procedures in relation to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, will comply with the principles contained within UK and International legislation. The following legislation is to be taken into consideration:

• The Children Act 1989 and 2004

• The Protection of Children Act 1999

• Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People DOH 2006

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

• The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 • The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child • Sexual Offences Act

• The Human Rights Act 1998

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

Scope

Wells RFC will ensure that all its members, whether they are coaches, parents, players or officials comply with the Best Practice Guidance as issued by the RFU. In summary, the following are NOT acceptable and will be treated seriously by the club and may result in disciplinary action being taken by the club, the Constitutive Body (CB) or the RFU:

• Working alone with a child, children or vulnerable adults.

• Consuming alcohol whilst responsible for children or vulnerable adults.

• Providing alcohol to children or allowing its supply.

• Smoking in the presence of children.

• Humiliating children or vulnerable adults.

• Inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a child or vulnerable adult.

• Participating in, or allowing, contact or physical games with children or vulnerable adults.

• Having an intimate or sexual relationship with any child or vulnerable adult developed as a result of being in a ‘position of trust.’

• Making sexually explicit comments or sharing sexually explicit material.

Wells RFC acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults involved in Wells RFC from harm and children from age groups U6 through to U12's must not be left at the Club on their own. They must always have family member / friend / carer adult supervision.

Wells RFC has an appointed **Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO). This is Thomas Payne,** contactable on **wellsrfc.safeguarding@gmail.com** or by phone **07713758274**, as our key officer to oversee all aspects involving the safety of children or vulnerable adults. The **Assistant Officer is Louise Garner – 07771824605**.

A child is anyone under the age of 18 engaged in any rugby union activity. However, where a 17-year-old male player is playing in the adult game it is essential that every reasonable precaution is taken to ensure his safety and well-being are protected.

The Key Principles of the "RFU Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults in Rugby Union Policy & Guidance – Creating Safer Environments" … are that:

• The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult (as appropriate) is and must always be paramount to any other considerations.

• All participants regardless of age, gender, ability or disability, race, faith, culture, size, shape, language or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse or harm.

• All allegations or suspicions of abuse, neglect, harm and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately.

• Working in partnership with other organisations, statutory agencies, parents, carers, children and young people is essential for the welfare of children and young people.

• Children have a right to expect support for personal and social development delivered by an appropriately recruited and vetted individual. They will be managed in relation to their participation in rugby union, whether they are playing, volunteering or officiating in the community or professional areas of the sport.

Wells RFC recognises that all children have the right to participate in sport in a safe, positive and enjoyable environment whilst at the same time being protected from abuse, neglect, harm and poor practice. Wells RFC recognises that this is the responsibility of everyone involved, in whatever capacity.

RECOGNISING ABUSE IN RUGBY

Abuse is a powerful and emotive term. It is a term used to describe ways in which children are harassed, 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.

To provide young people with the best possible experiences and opportunities in rugby, it is imperative that everyone operates within the accepted framework and demonstrates exemplary behaviour. This not only ensures that members of Wells RFC make a positive contribution to the development of young players and safeguards their welfare, but also protects all personnel from false allegations of abuse or poor practice.

The four main types of abuse are:

Emotional Abuse

In general terms, emotional abuse occurs when adults or even other young person's persistently fail to show children due care, love or affection, where a child may be constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted, or be subjected to sarcasm and unrealistic pressures. There may also be over-protection, preventing children from socialising, or bullying to perform to high expectations. The child may lose self-confidence and may become withdrawn and nervous. In a coaching situation, emotional abuse may occur when coaches' volunteers or parents:

• Provide repeated negative feedback

• Repeatedly ignore a young player's efforts to progress

• Repeatedly demand performance levels above those of which the young player is capable

• Over emphasise the winning ethic

Neglect

In general terms neglect as a form of abuse occurs when a child'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 coaching situation, neglect may occur when:

• Young players are left alone without proper supervision

• A young player is exposed to unnecessary heat or cold without fluids or protection

• A young player is exposed to an unacceptable risk of injury

Physical Abuse

In general terms, this occurs when adults, or even children, deliberately inflict injuries on a child, or knowingly do not prevent injuries. It includes injuries caused by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or using excessive force. It also occurs when an adult gives children alcohol, or inappropriate drugs, or fails to supervise their access to these substances. In a coaching situation, physical abuse may occur when:

• Coaches expose young players to exercise / training, which disregards the capacity of the player's immature and growing body.

• Coaches expose young players to injury due to overplaying, over-training or fatigue.

• Coaches expose young players to alcohol or give them the opportunity to drink alcohol below the legal age.

• Coaches expose young players to performance enhancing drugs and recommend that they take them.

Sexual Abuse

Young persons can be abused by adults (both male and female) or other young people. This may include encouraging or forcing a child or young person to take part in sexual activity. In a rugby situation sexual abuse may occur when:

• An adult uses the context of a training session to touch a young person in an inappropriate sexual way.

• Coaches, managers or volunteers use their position of power and authority to coerce young players into a sexual relationship.

• Coaches or other adult members of the club imply better progression of a player in return for sexual favours.

BULLYING

Bullying is not always easy to define and will not always be an adult abusing a young person. It is often that the bully is a young person. All coaches and personnel working within Wells RFC must be familiar with the different types of bullying. There are three main types of bullying Physical, Verbal and Emotional In a rugby situation bullying may occur when:

• A coach adopts a win-at-all-costs philosophy;

• A player intimidates others;

• An official is over officious

POOR PRACTICE

All coaches and personnel who undertake any role within the Wells RFC should be aware that any behaviour that contravenes any of the following codes of behaviour could be deemed to be poor practice. The Codes of Practice are:

• RFU Fair Play Codes

• RFU/RFUW Coaches' Code of Ethics

• RFU/RFUW Equity Policy

• RFU/RFUW Good Practice in the Rugby Setting

• RFU/RFUW Policy and Procedures for the Welfare Young People in Rugby Union

• RFU/RFUW Anti Bullying Policy

• RFU/RFUW Tour/Children and Young People Away from Home Policy

• RFU/RFUW Event Co-ordinator Pack (the guidelines in this pack must be followed for all tournaments and competitions)

• RFU/RFUW Parent Guide

PROCEDURES TO MANAGE ALLEGATIONS

As members of Wells RFC, the following guidelines should be followed where there is a concern relating to the welfare of a young person or vulnerable adult:

• If the young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or has been physically injured, ensure that they are safe and contact the police and social services

• If they are not in immediate danger but you have concerns either: - discuss the concerns with the CSO's or the Wells RFC Chairperson who will advise on the correct procedure for referring your concern appropriately OR

• Contact the RFU Child Protection Helpline

• Make a note of what you have seen or heard but do not delay in passing on the information. Complete the RFU Incident Record Form as soon as possible.

Please remember that it is not your responsibility to decide if abuse is occurring, but it is your responsibility to act on any concerns that you have.

RESPONDING TO SUSPICIONS

Any member of the Wells RFC who becomes aware of anything which causes them to feel uncomfortable **must** discuss it with the Club Safeguarding Officer's (CSO).

This means that all coaches and committee members of Wells RFC being aware of the attitudes and the interactions between children and all other coaches and administrative staff and each other.If the behaviour is contrary to this welfare policy and procedures and young people are at risk, then action must be taken.

All members of the Wells RFC must also be alert to any unusual incidents or activities where another adult is 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 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 CSO's ensuring that all the information is accurate.

• **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 proved.

• **Ensure the safety of the young person -** if urgent medical attention is required then call an ambulance, inform the doctors of your concerns and ensure that they are aware that this is a child protection issue.

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; contact the Wells RFC Safeguarding Officer (CSO) and/or Wells RFC Chairperson. In their absence advice can be sought from the NSPCC 24-hour helpline 0800 800 5000 or the RFU Safeguarding Line 0208 831 6655.

Action to take if a young person informs you that; they are concerned about someone's behaviour towards them in the rugby setting.

All coaches and members of Wells RFC will follow the principles set out within this document if they are informed by a young person of their concerns about someone's behaviour towards them. The CSO's can provide and assist with the completion of an Initial Issue / Concern Reporting Form.

Information which is passed to external agencies must be as helpful as possible. It will be necessary to make a detailed report at the time of the disclosure. The report should contain the following details as recorded by the CSO's.

• The young person's name, address and date of birth. Also if they have any disability.

• The nature of the allegation.

• A description of any injuries/bruising.

• Any observations about the behaviour/emotional state of the young person. • Times, location, dates which are relevant.

• The young person's account in their own words of what has happened.

• Actions that you have taken as a result of your concerns.

• Whether the person completing the report is expressing their own concerns or those of a third party.

The CSO's will:

• Sign and date the report.

• Keep a copy.

• Keep a record of the name and designation of the Social Services member of staff or police officer to whom the concerns were passed.

You must not investigate the disclosure yourself. You must:

• Make a full record of what has been said, heard or seen as soon as possible.

• Inform the Wels RFC Safeguarding Officer or in their absence the Wells RFC Minis/Junior Section Chairperson.

The Wells RFC Club Safeguarding Officers (CSO's) will report the matter to the RFU Safeguarding Officer and any other parties as directed by the RFU Safeguarding Team via the CB Safeguarding Manager.

Abuse

Following a decision by the RFU that the incident is deemed to be investigated as Child Protection/Abuse the CSO's must:

• Refer the allegation to the Police and Social Services. They will give advice concerning who should contact the child's parents/guardians.

• Inform the RFU Child Protection Officer of the advice given by the Police and Social Services. A written report utilising the Incident form is also to be forwarded to the RFU Child Protection Officer who will report the incident to the RFU Child Protection Referral Management Group.

Non-action is not an option. The welfare of the young person or vulnerable person is paramount.

GENERAL ADVICE

It is important when dealing with disclosures or observations which cause concerns the following:

• It is often difficult for individuals to disclose abuse. 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 they feel confident to disclose their concerns.

• For some young people the abuser may be the only person to provide them with attention and/or affection.

• It is vitally important that members of Wells RFC are vigilant and provide the appropriate levels of support.

Wells RFC is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children and young people to practice and play rugby.

We do this by:

• Recognising that all children have the right to freedom from any type of abuse.

• Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are carefully selected and accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of children in their care.

• Responding swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and by providing parents and children with the opportunity to voice concerns they may have.

• Appointing CSO's who will take specific responsibility for child safety and act as the main point of contact for parents, children and outside agencies.

• Ensuring access to confidential information is restricted to the CSO's or the appropriate external authorities.

• Reviewing the effectiveness of our Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults policy at regular occasions and within normal Committee meetings.

In order to accomplish these points, we have adopted the following aims and objectives:

• All coaches will attend an appropriate coaching course as soon as practicable when they begin work with children.

• All coaches and volunteers will have a job description.

• All coaches and assistant coaches are Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) vetted as a condition of holding this position.

• We will encourage women to qualify as coaches.

• A coach will not be appointed Head Coach of an age group until he/she has been trained to an appropriate level for the age group.

• The Club will encourage and help all coaches and volunteers to stay up to date with rugby coaching and child protection issues. This will include attendance at relevant coaching and child protection courses.

• All coaches and volunteers will be given a copy of the club's Code of Conduct for Coaches and will be expected to keep to it at all times.

• Written records will be kept of attendance, parental consent, accidents and other incidents. Procedure How Wells RFC will achieve compliance Wells RFC confirms that it adheres to the Rugby Football Union's:

• Welfare of Young People In Rugby Union • Creating Safe Environments

• Touring with Children & Vulnerable Adults – A Safeguarding Guide.

• Safeguarding Toolkit

• Anti-Bullying Policy

• Code of Conduct

Copies of all these this policies and procedures can be obtained from the RFU website at www.rfu.com

This policy and those above, are held by the CSO's in a designated Safeguarding file. It is the responsibility of the Head Coach to inform his support staff of this file and ensure they conform to all content requirements.

All policies of the club will be posted on the clubs official website and will be made known to the general and junior committees of Wells RFC.

All members of Wells RFC who have a regular supervisory contact with children or a management responsibility for those working with children must undertake an RFU Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS). The CSO's will be responsible for this implementation. Until such time that any individual has passed the DBS check, they will not be allowed to work with young people under the age of 18 unless accompanied by a checked individual.

Wells RFC manages the changing facilities and arranges for them to be supervised by two adults (DBS checked) of the appropriate gender for the players using the facilities. Wells RFC ensures that all its coaches, parents, officials and spectators are aware that adults must not change at the same time, using the same facilities as children or vulnerable adults.

Wells RFC will ensure that its coaches and team managers will receive the support and training considered appropriate to their position and role.

Any tours, overseas or domestic, undertaken by Wells RFC must comply with the relevant RFU Regulations and Guidance relating to tours.

Club Safeguarding Officer:



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