

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN RUGBY

Scottish Rugby supports and requires all members to observe the following standards of practice, including verbal and non-verbal actions when involved in activities with young players under the age of 18 years.

All concerns about breaches of this Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and responded to in line with Scottish Rugby Disciplinary Procedure and/or Procedure for Responding to Concerns.

This code of conduct is linked to the overarching Rugby Code of Conduct, which clubs sign up to as part of the annual Participation Agreement. It is also linked to the organisation's staff performance management systems and disciplinary policies.

GOOD PRACTICE

CLUB

- Implement suitable and robust recruitment/training for volunteers and staff to work with children
- Appoint suitably trained coaches and managers
- Ensure there is a clear way for children and parents to raise any concerns
- Appoint a child protection officer
- Adopt and implement a child protection policy
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible

ALL

- Make rugby fun, enjoyable and promote fair play principals
- Place value on the efforts and achievements of all players involved, including those on other teams
- Treat all players equally, with respect, dignity and fairness.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.

COACHES

- Follow Scottish Rugby age grade policies and Are You Ready to Play Rugby guidelines
- Properly supervise children during rugby activity
- Put the welfare and development of each player first before winning or achieving team performance goals.
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust and respect
- Include players in the decision-making process wherever possible and appropriate.
- Work in an open environment, wherever possible.
- Be an excellent role model
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of young players
- Follow medical advice and protocols relating to injury prevention and management

PRACTICE TO BE AVOIDED

COACHES

- Too much emphasis on the team winning over the enjoyment and development of the young players involved (Note: the balance of winning v player development will be different at different ages and levels of performance but should be in line with the relevant LTPD principles)
- Excessive training and competition, pushing young players against their will and putting undue pressure on them.
- Involving adults in practical demonstrations of contact rugby techniques.
- Spending inappropriate and unnecessary amounts of time working with children alone in private or unobserved situations
- One to one coaching sessions should only take place with parental consent and ideally with a chaperone and/or in a public place.
- One to one sessions for medical treatment are sometimes necessary for purposes of confidentiality.

GENERAL

- Failing to follow SRU guidelines and recommendations on best practise
- Having 'favourites'
- Arranging to transport a child alone in your car, without prior consent from the child's parents
- Smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children
- Entering player's bedrooms on trips away, unless in an emergency or in the interest of health and safety.
 - If it is necessary to enter rooms, knock and say that you are coming in.
 - The door should remain open, if appropriate.
- Where possible, doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

UNACCEPTABLE PRACTICE

COACHING

- Deliberately threatening, insulting, humiliating or embarrassing a player as a form of control and/or 'motivation'
- Reducing a player to tears as a form of control
- Engaging in rough or physical contact, including tackling a young player
- Swearing at young players or allowing players to do the same unchallenged
- Use sexualised language and/or allowing young players to do the same unchallenged
- Condoning or promoting excessive rivalry between players, teams and/or clubs on or off the pitch
- Shouting abusive or derogatory comments from the touchline at players or match officials

GENERAL

- Inviting or allowing young players to stay at your home
- Sharing a room alone with a young player
- Getting changed and/or showered in the same facilities at the same time as young players
- Forming intimate emotional, physical or sexual relationships with young players
- Allowing or engaging in sexual behaviour
 - this includes suggestive comments and provocative jokes and games
- Allowing or encouraging young players to smoke, take drugs or drink alcohol
- Failing to follow SRU policies on safety for young players
 - AYRTPR policies
 - Injury reporting procedures
- Allowing allegations made by a player to remain unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.