

City of Derry Rugby Football Club

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

September 2016 Version 1

PROCEDURES & CODES OF CONDUCT

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CITY OF DERRY RFC CHILD PROTECTION POLICY, PROCEDURES AND CODES OF CONDUCT

City of Derry Rugby Football Club Youth and Minis Sections exist to provide rugby facilities for children, young adults and persons with special needs from the local area, in a fun, safe and organised environment and are run on a voluntary basis.

Policy Statement

The Youth & Minis Sections of City of Derry Rugby Football Club are fully committed to the mental, physical and emotional development of its Age-Grade Players, to the best of their individual abilities, by creating an acceptable, ethical coaching framework, and to safeguard the well-being of its Participants and Volunteers, by protecting them from neglect, and physical, sexual or emotional harm. Fair-play, mutual understanding and cross-community aspects play an important role in the ethos of the Club.

This will be achieved by:

- Creating an environment in which the Participants receive the best possible training, appropriate to their age, maturity and ability.
- Raising the awareness of Child Protection issues with coaches, volunteers, parents and young persons.
- Making sure that all coaches/volunteers are vetted, trained and adequately supervised, and are individually made aware of the Club's ethos and Child Protection Policy, and supplied with a copy of the IRFU Declaration of Intent.
- Making children and parents aware that complaints can be made if they are unhappy, and the names of the responsible people to whom complaints can be made.
- Providing information about the aims of the Youth & Minis Sections of City of Derry RFC and what is expected from the Volunteers, Parents and Participants.
- Establishing and maintaining acceptable standards of all ethical behaviour.
- Developing the basic skills of the games of Rugby Football.
- Promoting the enjoyment of the game of Rugby Football.
- Remembering that young people play primarily for fun and enjoyment. Skill-learning and enjoyment, as well as the well-being and safety of the young people, must take priority over winning.

Issues of Competence

- Coaches shall confine themselves to practice in those fields of Coaching in which they have been trained, and which are recognised by the IRFU as being valid. Valid areas of expertise are those directly concerned with Rugby coaching. Training includes the accumulation of knowledge and skills through both formal coaching courses and by experience at a level of competence acceptable for coaching practice.
- Coaches should regularly seek ways of increasing their professional development and self-awareness.
- Coaches should welcome evaluation of their work by colleagues, and be able to account to Players, the City of Derry RFC, IRFU and colleagues for their actions.
- Coaches have a responsibility to themselves and their players to maintain their own effectiveness, resilience and abilities, and to know when their personal resources are so depleted as to make it necessary for them to seek help and/or withdraw from coaching whether temporarily or permanently.

City of Derry RFC So far that it is reasonably practicable will ensure:

- Proper supervision of children within the Club premises, with an appropriate ratio of coaches to children. This may vary depending on nature and location of activities along with ability and age of the young person.
- A safe environment for all members.
- Use proper, recommended equipment and use of equipment only when supervised by a coach.
- Abide by sport specific guidelines and set standards of good practice.
- Ensure playing / coaching surfaces, free from debris and animal faeces.
- A clearly defined area of play / in bounds, fenced and safe from vehicular traffic.
- Public Liability Insurance in place, covering all members of the Club.
- Only young people within same / similar age bands will be selected for team playing/ coaching.
- A First-Aider and first-aid kit on hand in event of an accident, with accident/ incident forms to be completed for every categorised serious accident. Irrespective of seriousness, all accidents must be reported to parents at collection.
- In the event of transport being required, this will only be provided either by approved suppliers or as organised by Head Coaches or Club Officials in accordance with Club policy.
- Ongoing training and information for Leaders.
- Implementation of policy and procedures as agreed by the Board of Directors, IRFU and all relevant appropriate authorities.
- Facilitation of open discussion on member protection issues.
- Support to members who report accusations of abuse.
- Suspected abuse information treated confidentially.
- Appropriate action taken if members breach standards of reasonable behaviour.
- The establishment and maintenance of a coaching register. Age grade groups will use an annually renewed registration form to gather the necessary information and guardian approvals.
- The designated officer has knowledge of statutory child protection procedures and their responsibility in reporting concerns from Co-operating to Safeguard Children DHSSPS.
- That all parents are kept informed and that parents have access to the club's Child Protection Policy.

City of Derry RFC has the right to:

- Expect all leaders to comply with its Child Protection Policy, Procedures and Codes of Conduct and all appropriate legislation and guidance.
- Expect all age grade players to maintain standards of reasonable behaviour.
- Take appropriate action to investigate and deal with members if there is a proven breach of its Child Protection Policy, Procedures and Codes of Conduct.
- Expect all members to undertake appropriate training when advised to.
- Expect all members to report any faulty equipment to a club official.
- Expect all members will not abuse members physically, emotionally or sexually.
- Acquire criminal record checks on all coaches/volunteers and maintain records on individuals in line with advice from the data protection agency (i.e. only hold records on individuals that they have a justifiable reason for holding).

Child Protection

The *Children (Northern Ireland) Order (1995)* is based on a clear and consistent set of principles designed with the common aim of promoting the welfare of children.

It is a fundamental policy of the IRFU and City of Derry RFC to respect the dignity and rights of each individual Age Grade player and to provide a safe environment for those Age Grade Players. Age Grade Players are defined by the IRFU as those who are members of a team which is regulated by reference to their dates of birth, and covers players from Under 6's to Under 19's. As the majority of these are children (i.e. under the age of 18), these players are the focus of this policy document, which is intended to provide a clear and consistent set of principles designed with the common aim of promoting the welfare of children, to be applied by the Mini and Youth Sections of the Club. This document is designed to complement and is not a substitute for the Principles contained in the IRFU Safeguarding document or the Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport of the Irish Sports Council.

Children have the right to be safe. All coaches/volunteers should ensure that this fundamental principle takes precedence over all other considerations.

This policy applies to all those involved in City of Derry RFC – Coaches, Volunteers, Officials, Parents and Young People.

The purpose of the Club's Child Protection policy is to establish and maintain standards for Coaches / Volunteers / Officials and to inform and protect members of the public using our services.

Ethical standards comprise such values as integrity, responsibility, competence and confidentiality.

Individuals who are members of City of Derry RFC are deemed to have assented to the Child Protection policy and as such, recognise and adhere to the principles and responsibilities embodied in it.

The Child Protection policy creates a framework within which Age Grade Coaches, when engaged in coaching – in the fullest sense of the expression - should always work. It has been written as a series of guidelines rather than a set of instructions.

However, violations of the Child Protection policy may result in complaints being made to the Club, and, in which case, the Board of Directors in determining whether a conduct complained about, has brought the sport into disrepute, or amounts to a violation of the IRFU Bye-laws. The City of Derry RFC Board will then consider the Child Protection policy provisions when assessing the guilt of individuals against whom complaints have been made and/or the appropriate sanctions to apply.

Awareness of the Issues

Background knowledge in relation to child abuse, the general principles of child protection and the ability to recognise and respond to abuse are important issues. Of primary concern for the Club is the issue of Child Protection of our young members within the operation of the club. However, being cognisant of the indicators of abuse in respect of young members caused by others outside the Club is of an equal importance for the safety and well being of that child.

Four types of abuse are recognised:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate foods, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive (faltering growth). In addition to these the Club recognises a responsibility to protect young persons from bullying and to have policies and procedure in place to do so.

Indicators of Abuse

The following is a list of some indicators of abuse, but it is not exhaustive:

Physical Indicators

- Unexplained bruising in soft tissue areas
- Repeated injuries
- Black eyes
- Injuries to the mouth
- Torn or bloodstained clothing
- Burns or scalds
- Bites
- Fractures
- Marks from implements
- Inconsistent stories/excuses relating to injuries

Behavioural Indicators

- Unexplained changes in behaviour - becoming withdrawn or aggressive
- Difficulty in making friends
- Distrustful of adults or excessive attachment to adults
- Sudden drop in performance
- Changes in attendance pattern
- Inappropriate sexual awareness, behaviour or language
- Reluctance to remove clothing

Dealing with Allegations and Procedures. – General Guidelines for Volunteers.

The club has appointed a **Club Welfare Officer (CWO)**, who will be responsible for dealing with such concerns at the club. This individual will be well known to volunteers, parents and participants, and will make themselves readily available to handle any inquiries of any nature, concerning the personnel, or any activities at the City of Derry RFC.

It is the responsibility of all Volunteers to be constantly on the look-out for any signs/indicators of abuse, such as: unusual behaviour, like continuous crying or being uncharacteristically withdrawn, or having visible marks like burns or bruises, etc
If a young person gives an indication that he / she may want to talk to a Volunteer about a problem, especially a complaint or an allegation, then that Volunteer should:

- Arrange a time and place, as soon as possible, where the child can talk freely but confidentially. (Under conditions outlined later).
- Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent manner through listening to and facilitating the child to tell about the problem.
- Stay calm and do not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying and take it seriously.
- Permit the child to speak without interruption, listen to everything he/she has to say, accepting what is said.
- Do not interrogate the child, but be clear what he/she has actually said.
- Thank the child for the information supplied and reassure him/her that he/she was right to tell, and that he/she will be helped.
- Alleviate feeling of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement on the person against whom the allegation is made.
- False promises should not be made such as saying no-one else will be told.
- Explain to the child that if the complaint is of a serious nature, that it may be necessary to inform others.
- Indicate what should happen next, such as informing parents, the CWO, reporting to statutory authority etc.
- Any and all consultations with others should be entirely confidential and should not involve investigative procedures.
- Write a detailed accurate account of any discussion, or action taken, including telephone calls, regarding alleged or suspected abuse, as soon as possible after the discussion has taken place.

- Do not trivialise child abuse issues or trivialise or exaggerate what the child has told you.

Contact the CWO immediately, in order to seek guidance in relation to the complaint. After this discussion, the CWO may contact the Social Services and, if appropriate, make a direct referral. If the CWO is not available, contact Social Services, telephone number (028) 2565 3333. Ultimate responsibility for the investigation of cases of child abuse suspected or otherwise, lies with the Northern Health and Social Services Board and the Statutory Authorities. It would not be appropriate for individuals, or the Club, to carry out internal investigations into cases where child abuse is suspected or has been alleged.

While this procedure should be followed, the CWO may consider that for complaints of a lesser nature e.g. bullying or cheating, that the matter may be handled internally without outside involvement. However, it must be emphasized that all cases must be thoroughly investigated and remedied, to the satisfaction of the child and parent concerned, and that appropriate action be taken.

It is important to maintain strict *confidentiality*. Personal and sensitive matters, or any alleged incident, should not be discussed with anyone except those closely involved.

Failure to Adhere to Best Practice

As referred to above, the CWO may receive complaints relating to matters in breach of this Code and/or the IRFU Safeguarding Policy, which would not constitute abuse. In such cases, the CWO will investigate the allegations fully and shall prepare a report, which he / she shall communicate to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall, upon receipt of such a report from the CWO, form a Sub-Committee to consider the matter, who shall follow the same procedures as adopted by the Club for alleged breaches of the Club's Code of Discipline under the Club's constitution. Following proper investigation by the Sub-Committee, including any appropriate hearing of all relevant parties, the Sub-Committee shall make recommendations to the Board of Directors, which can then take whatever action (if any) it believes is warranted or appropriate. Following the decision of the Board of Directors, the CWO may advise the Ulster Branch Child Welfare Officer of the concern and the action taken.

Equality Statement

City of Derry RFC aims to promote the sport of Rugby Union for all people, and will be mindful of the need to carry out our functions in a manner which promotes equality of opportunity between:

- Persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation.
- Between men and women generally.
- Between persons with a disability and persons without.
- Between persons with dependents and persons without.

All members should have regard to the Equal Opportunities Guidelines contained in this document. Anyone engaging in discriminatory behaviour, be they player, coach, volunteer, parent or spectator, will be dealt with seriously by the Club.

City of Derry RFC recognises the additional vulnerability of some children and the extra difficulties they may face when seeking help, i.e.

- Dependency due to disability may make some children feel powerless.
- On occasions, children may have limited ability to communicate their feelings.
- A negative self-image can make children vulnerable to manipulation by others.

To address this vulnerability, coaches will seek guidance on working with children with special needs from external agencies, parents / carers / guardians and the children themselves.

Codes of Conduct

It is essential for everyone involved to be made aware of the behavioural standards required at City of Derry RFC and what is and is not acceptable. On joining the Club, all participants and Volunteers are to be made aware of the acceptable general code of conduct below:

- **No foul or abusive language.**
- **No bullying.**
- **Respect for the other participants.**
- **Be on time.**

City of Derry RFC shall use the club web site to make available copies of its policy, codes of conduct and handbooks and everyone will be asked to make themselves familiar with the contents of each. The Community Rugby Handbook will also be used to communicate particular information taken from this policy document in a relevant and informative manner. The club may take appropriate action against anyone who is proven to be in breach of these codes of conduct.

Responsible Club Officers

Director of Community Rugby

He has overall responsibility for all levels of Community Rugby. He is a member of the Club Board of Directors and Board of Governors.

Youth Convenor

He has responsibility for Youth and Mini rugby, is a member of the Board of Governors and reports to the Director of Community Rugby. He is responsible for the organisation and coaching of rugby football at U-18, U-16, and U-14 levels. He / she is a member of the Club Board of Governors.

Mini Rugby Convenor

Has responsibility for the organisation and coaching rugby football at Minis up to P7 and U-12 levels. He / she is a member of the Club Board of Governors.

Club Welfare Officer (CWO)

Has responsibility to:

- Act as a resource to all members with regards to young person's issues.
- Ensure that children have a say in the running of the Club.
- Promote the values, attitudes and structures which make sport enjoyable to all participants.
- Communicate with Ulster Branch and Club Officers information relating to young people in sport.
- Attend Club training sessions to act as a resource to children and volunteers.
- Encourage involvement of parents / guardians in Club activities.
- Report regularly to relevant Club Committees.
- Influence policy and practice within the Club to prioritise young person's needs.
- Accept and act upon reports from other Volunteers.
- Report cases of child protection concerns to the Northern Health and Social Services Board, and to the relevant Statutory Authorities.

General Guidelines for all Volunteers

To accommodate a proper code of conduct, the following practices are laid down as guidelines for Volunteers who should:-

- Adhere to Child Protection guidelines as set out by the DHSS, and adopt policies favoured by the Sports Council for Northern Ireland.
- Adhere to the IRFU Declaration of Intent and IRFU Safeguarding policy.
- Share information about child protection and encourage other Volunteers to develop their training and awareness in this field.

Volunteers should never:

- Engage in a sexually provocative manner, or indulge in horseplay which may be construed in the wrong manner.
- Allow children to use foul language unchallenged.
- Smoke in the presence of children.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child, even in fun.
- Allow complaints or allegations made by a young person to pass without being recorded and passed on.

The Club is committed to reviewing its policy, and what constitutes good practice, at regular intervals. Further general guidelines are outlined below:

Time alone

Volunteers are advised to avoid spending excessive time alone, or unobserved, with children, and never go into the toilet alone with children. When supervising changing rooms, adult Volunteers should work in pairs. Coaches should not take a training session alone. If an occasion arises when some privacy is required, other adults should be informed, and at least one should be within earshot of the conversation. The door of the room should always be left open.

Criticism

Volunteers must respect the rights and dignity of all children and treat them with equality. Severe criticism, harsh words or sarcasm should be avoided.

Meetings

Meetings with an individual child should take place as publicly as possible. Volunteers should never make arrangements to meet a child alone in his/her home. Volunteers should not meet with children outside organized activities, unless it is with the full knowledge and consent of the parents and the Club.

Physical Contact

Volunteers should avoid unnecessary physical contact with children. On occasion, when an injury or accident occurs or a child is distressed, physical contact may be unavoidable. The

involved adult should fully explain to the child what he / she is doing, but then only touch him / her with the consent of the injured party, and in full view of as many persons as possible.

However, if the injury / accident seems worse than trivial, the Volunteer / Coach should immediately call for an ambulance, and notify the Parent(s) of the injured child. Accidents should be fully reported in an Accident Report Form held in the Clubhouse and copies of which should be held by all age group Head Coaches.

Acts of Celebration

Coaches and committee persons should be careful of extending hugs and other acts of celebration where bodily contact is involved. This is important not only for the protection of the Coaches, but also for the young person.

Inappropriate Touch

If a child touches a Volunteer in an inappropriate place, the Volunteer should record the incident and report it to another adult. While an incident could be purely innocent or horseplay, efforts should be made to inform the offending child that this type of behaviour is not acceptable, but in a manner which does not intimidate the involved party.

Car Journeys

Car journeys involving children, however short, should be with the full knowledge and consent of the parents, and someone in charge at the Club. It is not good practice to be alone with a child in a car, and if possible, the pick-up point or drop-off point should be with at least two children.

Outings / Trips Away from Club & Overnight stays.

Club outings / travel: These should always be well organized:

- Parents should be informed by letter or e-mail, of times of departure and return.
- An appropriate number of adults should be involved for adequate adult/children ratio (one adult per ten children) to ensure the proper supervision of the children in their charge.
- Buses will only be hired from a reputable firm.
- Parents should be clearly informed of travel arrangements, times of departure and return, details of the residential accommodation being used, pocket money, etc.
- In such accommodation a Volunteer should never ask a child to his/her room, or share a room with a child.
- Volunteers should check young person's rooms in pairs.
- The young person should be made aware of the availability of telephones to contact home.
- Parents should be supplied with contact telephone numbers in case of any emergency.
- Parents should sign a Consent Form prior to departure and be asked for any relevant medical information.

Communication

City of Derry RFC encourages communications between participants and coaches in relation to coaching sessions, and it is important to listen to the young person's views on the merits or otherwise of matters which concern their development.

All Participants, Volunteers and Parents will be notified of the availability of City of Derry RFC Child Protection Policy, which will be published on-line in the club web-site and updated as required.

All participants and parents are made aware of the availability of the Coaches or Officers to approach in relation to all the activities at City of Derry RFC. Telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are made readily available, and if need be, a meeting can be arranged.

Guidelines for Volunteers for Reporting Allegations/Incidents/Concerns

City of Derry RFC recognises the difference between abuse and failure to adhere to best practice. Although all complaints are to be taken seriously, failure to adhere to best practice, may in certain cases constitute misconduct, as opposed to an issue of abuse. Any such failure to follow best practice which does not constitute abuse can be dealt with internally through the Club's disciplinary procedures. Complaints or suspicions of abuse on the other hand, are matters that the Club shall report to the IRFU Ulster Branch Child Welfare Officer, who will take steps to safeguard the player(s) and who shall refer the matter to the relevant Statutory Authorities and to the IRFU National Child Welfare Officer.

- A Volunteer should never keep suspicions of abuse by a colleague to him / herself. If there is an attempt to cover up, that volunteer could also be implicated by his/her silence. He / she should inform the appropriate person at the club of his / her suspicions.
- It is important to remember that reporting suspected child abuse in good faith is not the same as making an accusation of abuse i.e. reporting does not mean accusing.
- Responsibility for the investigation of child abuse cases suspected or otherwise, lies with the Statutory Authorities (social services and the police). Responsibility for monitoring and co-coordinating the management of such cases also rests with the Statutory Authorities.
- It is not appropriate for individuals, Clubs or Branches to carry out internal investigations into cases where child abuse is suspected.
- Any person who knows or suspects that a child is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed has a duty to convey his/her concern to the Statutory Authorities.
- An Official against whom an allegation of abuse has been made should be informed that this is not an accusation and that the procedures being undertaken are in accordance with statutory guidelines.

- He or she should be assured that all information will be dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner within the Club or Branch.
- The Official should be made aware of the general nature of any allegations made against him/her (except in the case of child sexual abuse allegations) and of any allegation being made known to the Statutory Authorities.
- The Official concerned should be afforded the opportunity to present a formal response to the allegation to senior personnel in the Club or Branch. From this point onwards the matter should only be dealt with by the Statutory Authorities.
- In the case of an allegation of child sexual abuse, it will be necessary to withhold the name of the child and the precise details of the allegation, in the interest of confidentiality and child protection.
- Where possible, inform the parents / guardians of the child unless in doing so the child will be further endangered.

Dealing with a Concern

It may be appropriate for a person to discuss concerns they have with another person in the club (e.g. CWO or the Youth Convenor), or should the concern relate to this person, then a senior official of the Club should be notified of the concerns. It is advisable that all inquiries are made directly to the local Statutory Authorities.

The type of discussions referred to in the above would most likely happen in cases where no specific allegation of child abuse has been made, but the concern is based on emotional behaviour and / or physical indications of a particular child.

When matters regarding the safety of young person's arise (except in the event of abuse) in the Club scenario, it will also be necessary for a Senior Club official to be informed of the allegations made, so that suspension of the person, against whom the allegations have been made from activities which involve age-grade players, may be carried out until the conclusion of an investigation by the Statutory Authorities.

To this end the Club has specifically designated a **Club Welfare Officer (CWO)**.

Actions by Club

- In the case of a suspension, the official / volunteer / coach being suspended should be formally notified by senior personnel within the Club.
- All incidents reported or observed should be recorded on a **Club Incident Form**. All concerns and allegations made should be carefully recorded. Confidentiality should be maintained at all stages. All communication between involved parties will be on a strictly "need to know basis" and all paperwork guarded to avoid lose circulation.
- A copy of the completed form should be given to the CWO within 24 hours.
- The CWO will be responsible for storing any report in a safe and secure environment
- The CWO will also be responsible for forwarding information on to the Branch designated officer for monitoring purposes and, on occasions, advice.

Important Points:

- Should anyone witness or receive information that leads them to believe that a serious breach of this Code has occurred, in addition to observing the Reporting Procedures defined above, they are required to bring the matter to the attention of the relevant management body of the Club. No further action need be taken on their part, and no information is to be provided to others, save as provided below.
- If anyone has evidence of an illegal activity that directly relates to the game, they are obliged to inform the Police Service of Northern Ireland as appropriate. In addition a club official is to be informed who should notify the Ulster Branch.
- No one should discuss the matter with persons not already involved except with the express permission of the investigating authorities (e.g. the CWO).
- Everyone is required to give every possible assistance to the Police Service of Northern Ireland, or to the appropriate Committee of the Irish Rugby Football Union (Ulster Branch) in the investigation of the matter, and to assist with any necessary steps being taken by them in relation to the matter.
- Should a member of the Club make or repeat false allegations against a fellow member, then the former should be held liable.

Action by CWO in the event of notification.

If a complaint of concern or an allegation of abuse by a Volunteer, reaches the CWO:-

- He will record and investigate the complaint.
- If it is bad practice, he will deal with it as a misconduct issue, take appropriate action, and inform the parent / child of the action taken.
- If it is abuse, he will report the complaint to the appropriate Statutory Services, the Club Board of Directors and the Ulster Branch (IRFU).
- If it is of concern or an allegation about abuse by external persons, then the CWO will record what the child says, or what has been seen, and report the concern to the appropriate Statutory Services.

Full contact details for the CWO are available in the City of Derry RFC Clubhouse or available through any club official.

Statutory Services

Area Child Protection Committee,
Northern Health & Social Services Board,
County Hall,
182 Galore Road
City of Derry
Tel: (028) 2565 3333
Out of Hours number: (028) 9446 8833
Website: <http://www.nhssb.n-i.nhs.uk>

Director of Children's' Services
Homefirst Trust Headquarters,
5 Greenmount Avenue,
City of Derry
Tel: (028) 2563 3719 or (028) 2563 3700

NSPCC
2A-F Rona Gardens,
Ballykeel 2
City of Derry.
BT43 6DA
Tel: (028) 2564 7999

Training & Development Officer,
Northern Area Child Protection Committee
Office,
Holywell Hospital Site,
60 Steeple Road,
Antrim.
BT41 2RJ
Tel: (028) 9448 7655
E-mail: acpc@homefirst.n-i.nhs.uk

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
Child Protection in Sport Unit:
(028) 9035 5756

PSNI. Care Unit
(028) 2565 3355

PSNI Child Abuse enquiry Unit
(028) 9065 0222

Bullying

Bullying is a common problem which affects many people of all ages, at sometime in their lives. It is an extremely upsetting experience for everyone involved, at play, at school or in the workplace. As with any problem, it can be solved only if brought into the open and talked about. Otherwise the scars can remain for years. Coaches should challenge bullying in any form i.e. physical or emotional. Bullying will not be tolerated by City of Derry RFC and is not an accepted behaviour towards anyone; be they young person, coach, volunteer or parent.

All instances of alleged bullying will be investigated and appropriate actions will be taken by the Club officers. Anyone being bullied should not keep it to him / herself. Any incidence of bullying can be reported to a Coach or a parent, who should then inform the CWO so that the correct protocol can then be followed.

The web site: <http://www.bullying.com/> was created by a schoolboy who was himself bullied and now offers help and support to young persons and parents, including guidance on ways of dealing with bullying. It also contains an e-mail help link which will answer any relevant questions.

Recognition

Bullying can include:--

- **Physical** – assault like pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching or unwanted physical contact, damage to personal belongings etc
- **Emotional** – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading malicious rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation or the continual ignoring of individuals and excluding them from social groups, sectarian/racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, sexual comments and /or suggestions.

Bullying will not be accepted or condoned. All forms of reported bullying will be addressed by the Club, further:

- Children from ethnic minorities, disabled children, young people who are gay or lesbian, or those with learning difficulties are more vulnerable to this form of abuse and may well be targeted.
- Everybody has the responsibility to work together to stop bullying – the child, the parent, the coach, the Club official.
- City of Derry RFC is committed to the early identification of bullying, and prompt collective action to deal with it. If required, City of Derry RFC will establish a forum, including children, parents & coaches, to address, monitor and stop bullying.
- Children should be encouraged to take a role in stopping bullying in the club's age-grade squads.

- Policy and practice should be reviewed regularly in the light of changing needs and changes adopted by other agencies (e.g. schools).
- Coaches will have access to appropriately trained staff for support when dealing with bullying.

Support to the Young Person

- All young club members should know who will listen to and support them.
- Any advice and assistance should be given by an experienced coach.
- All young club members should have access to Helpline numbers.
- All young club members should be told what is being recorded, in what context and why.
- Systems should be established to facilitate children wishing to talk about bullying or any other issue that affects them. Barriers to talking need to be removed to enable children to approach adults.
- Anyone who reports an incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and be supported, whether they are the person being bullied or the person who is bullying.
- Any reported incident of bullying will be investigated objectively and will involve listening carefully to all those involved.
- Anyone being bullied will be supported and assistance given to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment which allows their healthy development.
- Those who bully will also be supported and encouraged to stop bullying.
- Sanctions involving periods of isolation, or which diminish and make individuals look or feel foolish in front of others, must be avoided.

Support to the Parents

- Parents should be advised on City of Derry RFC policy and practice about bullying.
- Any incident of bullying will be discussed with the young person's parent(s).
- Parental advice on action will be sought and agreements made as to what action should be taken.
- Information and advice on coping with bullying will be given.
- Support should be offered to the parent(s) including information on other agencies or support lines.

Practical Steps

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reported to PSNI, dealing with bullying behaviour is the responsibility of all Coaches and Club Members.

However, when a problem is spotted, the relevant coaches should arrange to meet the CWO to discuss the steps to be taken to address the problem and report back to the CWO at the end of the process.

How can it be prevented?

- Ensure that all members follow the Club / IRFU codes of conduct, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member.
- Deal with any incidents as they arise. What may seem a minor once off, could be or become part of a pattern. It is important to deal with the problem early before it becomes a big problem or spreads throughout the group.
- Use a whole group policy or “No-Blame Approach”, i.e., *not* ‘bullying the bully’ but working with bullies and the group of young people, helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and so make the problem a ‘shared concern’ of the group.
- Reinforce that there is ‘a permission to tell’ culture rather than a ‘might is right’.
- Encourage players to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or different children.
- Offer the victim immediate support and put the ‘no blame approach’ into operation.
- Never tell a young person to ignore bullying. They can’t ignore it.
- Never encourage a young person to take the law into their own hands.
- Tell the victim there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault.

Guidance for Anti-Bullying for the Individual

- Respect every young person’s need for and rights to, a play environment where safety, security, praise, recognition and opportunity for taking responsibility are available.
- Respect for every individual’s feelings and views.
- Recognise that everyone is important and that our differences make each of us special.
- Show appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions and progress.

Vulnerable Adults

Vulnerable Adults are defined as those people 18 years and over, whose physical and / or mental capacity to protect themselves is limited by sensory disability, mental illness or learning difficulties, and their degree of dependency makes it difficult to obtain assistance from others who may be capable and interested to protect them.

Like children, vulnerable adults can be subjected to abuse or harm or exploitation, so the above guidelines and procedures should be similarly applied in dealing with these people.

Smoking, Alcohol & Drugs Policy

Smoking

- It is illegal to sell cigarettes to anyone under the legal age.
- Anyone who does not comply with the Smoke Free Law will be committing a criminal offence. Smoking is prohibited within all City of Derry RFC buildings and breach of this important safety rule may result in removal from the club. Smokers are also required not to smoke immediately outside any open entrance to the clubhouse, due to passive smoking implications.
- Every individual has the right to a “smoke free” clubhouse. Only those who are the appropriate legal age should be allowed to smoke on club property. Anyone found smoking who is not the legal age should be requested to extinguish the cigarette and if appropriate their guardian / carer informed of the incident. Smoking should be avoided by the Age-Grade Player. Smoking is a serious health risk. It should play no part in a player’s lifestyle.

Alcohol

- Alcohol should only be consumed on club property by those who are the appropriate legal age. Anyone under the legal age found to be drinking on club property should be requested to stop and if appropriate their guardian / carer informed of the incident. It is a legal requirement not to sell alcohol to anyone under the appropriate age.
- Alcohol and alcohol advertising is part of everyday life. Young people are not only influenced by trends and peer pressures but are also exposed to constant alcohol advertising. These advertisements seek to make the consumption of alcohol acceptable and trendy and therefore making the awareness of the pitfalls of alcohol consumption more difficult. Sports Leaders should ensure Age-Grade Players are aware of the dangers of alcohol abuse.

Alcohol cont...

Reasons why alcohol is to be discouraged:

- Alcohol promotes fluid loss i.e. it has a diuretic effect on the body. Maintaining a state of hydration is important in order to function at one's best.
- Alcohol consumption reduces the body's ability to replenish glycogen following training and playing and so has a negative impact on fuel recovery.
- Alcohol has a vasodilatory effect on the body, i.e. it keeps the blood vessels open. A bruised and injured body needs to be managed immediately. Proper management especially in the first 48 hours of incurring the injury is critical to the speedy return of the Age-Grade Player to training and playing.
- Alcohol intake is likely to facilitate increased bleeding and swelling and so it is to be avoided especially when the Age-Grade Player is recovering following a game or when he is injured.
- Alcohol consumption can affect reaction, balance and co-ordination.
- Alcohol consumption generally occurs at night time. All players require sleep. It is during sleep that the body repairs damaged tissue. It is important not to deprive the body of this important sleep requirement.

Drugs

- City of Derry RFC is concerned to provide a safe and healthy sporting environment. It recognises that this can be put at risk by those who misuse drugs to such an extent that it may affect their health, performance, conduct and relationships. The effects of drugs in sport can also create serious health and safety risks not only to the player but also fellow team mates and opposition. Substance abuse will not be tolerated and its discovery may lead to legal and club disciplinary action being taken. The following rules should be adhered to by all age grade players, coaches and helpers:
- Do not come to City of Derry RFC under the influence of non-prescribed drugs. Instances of this being discovered will be reported to a member of the Club Board of Directors, PSNI, Parents/Carer and appropriate social services.
- Do not bring non-prescribed drugs onto club premises. Instances of this being discovered will be reported to the Club Board of Directors, PSNI, Parents/Carer and appropriate social services.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist about the side-effects of prescribed medications and inform your team coach if required.
- Offer support and advice to players who you suspect of suffering from alcohol or drug abuse: Do not "protect" them by keeping silent.
- Ask for assistance if you feel that matters are beyond your own control. Your request will be dealt with in strictest confidence subject to the provisions of the law.

Recruitment of Volunteers / Coaches

While the vast majority of people who wish to work with children are well motivated, there is a need for care in the selection / recruitment procedure, to screen out those who are not suitable in the creation and maintenance of good practice for the protection of all involved.

In recruiting volunteers / coaches, the following procedure will be carried out by the Club. All new volunteers must complete the Club Application Form. This will then be supplemented by the following processes:-

- Confirmation by appropriate ID checks of their identity and other details e.g. sight of a driving licence (both card and paper parts) or photographic id with confirmation of address.
- Contact with the referees listed on the Application form is to be conducted by the appropriate club official in the event that the applicant is unknown entirely to the group or club. If there any doubts created through this process then the CWO, Mini-Rugby Convenor, Youth Convenor or the Director of Community Rugby must be consulted to help decide if the potential recruit is suitable.
- Potential recruits should be made aware of the City of Derry RFC Child Protection Policy.
- All volunteers / coaches in regular contact with young people must also read and submit to the club an IRFU Declaration of Intent form on an annual basis. Age grade convenors are to ensure 100% compliance with this on an annual basis, a record is to be kept of all those who have signed and all forms are to be returned to the CWO on completion.
- The role for which the individual has applied, and associated responsibilities, should be clearly explained, and also that failure to comply with the rules and regulations of the Club could result in exclusion from the Club.
- All accepted recruits will be ratified by the Club's Community Rugby Directorate.
- As soon as it is known that the volunteer / coach is going to be in regular contact with the young person, all City of Derry RFC coaches / volunteers must submit to a criminal record check by completing the Ulster Branch Access NI. This is to be renewed every 3 years by everyone who is subject to the criminal record check process.
- Appointment of Volunteers / Coaches may be on the basis of their current or previous experience in either playing or coaching Rugby and their appointment is at the discretion of the Club.

Training for Volunteers / Coaches

Training

- Ulster Branch approved Coaching or Rugby Development courses for volunteers / coaches are scheduled each year / season and all coaches / volunteers are expected to enhance their qualifications in relation to their roles within the Club and qualify to at least Mini-rugby or Foundation level.
- Education and training in the basics of Child Protection will apply to all coaches' volunteers / management committee members working with the children. City of Derry RFC is committed to reviewing their current Child Protection Policy and updating it where necessary.
- Child protection training should include basic awareness of child protection issues and of the Club's Child Protection Policy and Procedures including the IRFU Safeguarding document.
- Convenors are responsible for ensuring that all new coaches have attended child protection awareness workshop within six months of taking up their post. This opportunity should also be made available to other volunteers to enable a culture of a child-focused club to prevail. The CWO and other club officials will be available to assist in achieving this requirement.
- Convenors are responsible for ensuring all coaches and volunteers should receive induction, and training appropriate to their role. Training should be updated and reviewed regularly for new coaches / volunteers and in line with changing legislation. The CWO and other club officials will be available to assist in achieving this requirement.
- Training courses currently provided by Ulster Branch are all listed on the Ulster Branch web site.
- Child Awareness and First Aid Courses are usually provided by the local Borough Council and all coaches / volunteers are expected to attend.

Support & Supervision

City of Derry RFC recognises that it is good practice to set up a system of support & supervision of coaches / volunteers. This will enable coaches / volunteers to become more effective by identifying training needs and dealing quickly with difficulties. Volunteers will be offered regular opportunities to review their experiences at City of Derry RFC and to identify any training or further support they require.

Guidelines for Safety Considerations

Risk Assessments

Head Coaches / Coaches can analyse hazards both actual and potential to their team environments by carrying out an age grade appropriate risk assessment which covers all aspects of Health, Safety and Environment. This assessment should be reviewed annually by Head Coaches taking in to account any upward movement in the age grade teams bearing in mind hazards, areas of risk and attitude to risk all change with age.

Areas to be considered within the assessment and actions agreed to mitigate the risk might include:

- Access to grounds and the playing area.
- Medical conditions in the group e.g. eyesight, heart conditions or allergies.
- Safety procedures for players.
- Appropriate training for the age, maturity or ability of the group involved.
- Session structure including warm-up and cool-down periods during coaching sessions.
- Being aware of any medical problems any players.
- Equipment use and checks.
- Actions on emergency situations.
- Access to a telephone and who might phone for what reason.
- Availability / location of first aid kits and skills.
- Supervision issues on and off pitch e.g. toilet breaks
- Travel; who are the drivers? Licence and insurance checks.

In the event of an accident

The Coach should:

- Stop the activity immediately.
- Quickly assess the extent of the injury.
- Give immediate appropriate treatment, remaining mindful of limitations listed earlier.
- If the injury is worse than trivial, contact the Paramedics and Ambulance in attendance, or phone the emergency services.
- Make contact with the child's parents.
- Record in detail all facts surrounding the accident, including the names of witnesses
- The IRFU Serious Injury and a **Concussion Report Form** must be completed by the head coach of the appropriate age grade team.
- The form once complete should then be submitted to either the Director of Community Rugby, the CWO or direct to the Club Secretary who is responsible for maintaining all records of injury / concussion within the club.
- The Hon Secretary Will then post or email to the relevant provincial office within one week of the injury occurrence. The purpose of the form is to ensure that all serious injuries and suspected / confirmed concussions are reported to the IRFU and

provincial branches and that a record is kept of these injuries for insurance purposes. Injury reporting is a requirement of the IRFU insurers.

- The form can be downloaded at <http://www.ulsterrugby.com/rugby-in-ulster/resources/player-welfare.php#.ViANm8vwwIU>

Serious Injury Definition:-

Any injury occurring during rugby training or game, which requires that the injured player is transported to and / or treated in hospital.

Concussion – see www.irishrugby.ie/concussion for further information on concussion.

Guidelines on Photography and Videoing of Children

There have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on sports websites and other publications. Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children when they are accompanied with personal information – this is X who lives at y, is a member of the z rugby club and who likes a certain music group. This information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to “groom” that child for abuse. Secondly, the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of this adapted material finding its way onto child pornography sites.

City of Derry RFC has recognised the need to develop a policy in relation to the use of images of young people on our website and in other publications. We have considered the type of images that are suitable and that appropriately represent our sport, without putting children at increased risk. When assessing the potential risks in the use of images of players, the most important factor is the potential of inappropriate use of images of children. By increasing the awareness of the potential risks and taking appropriate steps, the potential for misuse of images can be reduced:

- City of Derry RFC where appropriate will avoid the use of the first name and surname of individuals in a photograph. This reduces the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the sport.
- As part of the registration process parental permission is to be sought to use an image of the young person. This ensures that parents are aware of the way the image of their child is representing the sport.
- Only use images of children in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- In the event of discovering or receiving a report of an inappropriate image, Head coaches should follow the child protection procedures, ensuring both the CWO and the Social Services and / or Police are informed.

City of Derry RFC has:

- Established the type of images that appropriately represent the sport for the Web and other media.
- Thought about the level of consideration given to the use of images of children in other publications, e.g. the local press or club web site.

Guidelines for Use of Photographic Filming Equipment at Sporting Events.

City of Derry RFC will:

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour.
- Inform children and parents that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs.
- Not allow unsupervised access to children, or one to one photo sessions at club events.

- Not approve / allow photo sessions outside the events or at a child's home.
- Ensure that if parents or other spectators are intending to photograph or video at an event, they will be made aware of the club's regulations.
- Inform children and parents that if they have concerns, they could report these to the organiser.
- Encourage anyone with concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography to report these to the event organiser or official and recorded in the same manner as any other child protection concern.

Confidentiality Statement

City of Derry RFC will never promise to keep secrets. However, information of a confidential nature will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis, with the welfare of the child paramount.

Coaches inevitably gather a great deal of personal information about Players in the course of a working relationship. Coach and Players must reach agreement as to what is regarded as confidential information i.e. not divulged to a third party without the express approval of the Player.

Confidentiality does not preclude the disclosure of information, to persons who can be judged to have a "right to know", relating to Players when relevant to the following:

- Evaluation of the Player for competitive selection purposes;
- Pursuit of disciplinary action involving Players;
- Pursuit of disciplinary action by the IRFU or statutory bodies involving fellow coaches, in alleged breaches of the Code of Ethics.

Guidelines on Confidentiality

Confidentiality; who needs to know what?

Considerations of confidentiality will not be allowed to override the rights of children or young members to be protected from harm.

City of Derry RFC has a clear statement about confidentiality and how this is to be respected. This statement covers much broader issues than child protection. We insist that families and children in contact with our organisation are, for example, sure that personal and sensitive details which they have confided about their lives or family situations will not be talked about or passed on to others without their consent.

However, the legal principle that 'the welfare of the child is paramount' means that considerations of confidentiality should not be allowed to override the right of children or young members to be protected from harm. Everyone in our Club, including children, must be aware that they can never promise to keep secrets. However, information of a confidential nature will only be communicated on a 'need to know' basis. Our Statement of Confidentiality makes this clear.

In any situation where there is an allegation or suspicion of abuse, it is important that the rights of both the victim and the alleged perpetrator are protected by ensuring that only those who need to know are given the relevant information.

However, this will mean, at the very least, informing:

- The Club Welfare Officer;
- Where relevant, a statutory child protection agency;
- The parents of the child;
- The alleged perpetrator.

Informing the parents of a child about whom there is a concern, must be handled in a sensitive way and should only be undertaken in consultation with a statutory agency.

Any individual under suspicion whether or not he/she is a coach or volunteer within a group, has a right to be notified of the cause of the concern. This will also need careful consideration and should only be undertaken in consultation with a statutory agency. Depending on the outcome of our initial inquiries, volunteers and other agencies who have contact with either the child concerned or the alleged perpetrator, may need to be given brief details of the incident and subsequent action.

The Club Welfare Officer or a statutory agency will provide advice on who should be told, when they should be told, and the kind of information which it is appropriate to share. All information of a personal nature will be stored in a safe and secure setting. Those who will be given access to this information will be:

- Club Welfare Officer.
- Club Membership Secretary or Honorary Secretary responsible for mailing addresses, fees, Club information etc.
- Club Mini or Youth Coaches and Rugby Development Officers for information relating to a child's ability to participate in any activity.

Data Protection

City of Derry RFC is committed to ensuring that any information gathered in relation to our youth/mini squads meets the specific responsibilities as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998.

To achieve this we have drawn up the following guidelines:

- The Youth and Mini Convenors will use the same registration form to ensure consistency of information and that the child/guardian is made aware of why we require the information.
- The names and addresses of children and guardians are only gathered for the purpose of maintaining player records throughout the representative age-grade structures.
- The information requested is relevant to the needs of the IRFU database and to ensure we adhere to good child protection practices.
- We will make every effort to ensure the information entered onto the database from paper records is accurate and kept up to date. The paper record will be stored in a secure place & to the same standards as the data base.
- The IRFU will only keep a child's information on the database for up to 5 years.
- The database will be maintained centrally and can only be accessed by eligible IRFU staff members and the City of Derry RFC Registration officer.
- The database or any individual's name and address will not be forwarded to a third party without the prior permission of the child and guardian.

The Club will inevitably gather a great deal of personal information about its members, participants and volunteers, but must adhere to the principles laid out in the Data Protection Act (N.I.). The Club, Volunteers and Participants must reach agreement as to what cannot be divulged to a third party without the prior permission of the person concerned. This does not preclude the disclosure of information relevant to:

- Evaluation for competitive selection.
- Pursuit of disciplinary action.

- Investigation of alleged breaches of the Code of Ethics by Statutory Authorities.
- Information necessary for the benefit of the safety of the greater public.

Useful Reference and Source Material

- Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children in Sport.(Sports Council NI 2003)
- Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.
- IRFU Safeguarding Policy.
- Our Duty to Care – DHSS&PS 2000.
- Sports Council of N.I. - Code of Ethics.
- Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) order Information Notes 1-3
- Children (NI) order 1995
- Getting It Right DHSSPS 2004
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children DHSS&PS 2003
- Area Child Protection Committee – Regional Child Protection Policy 2005

Availability of Information

It is important that there is a free flow of information between City of Derry RFC Officials, members, coaches/volunteers, children and parents, in terms of the promotion of Rugby and what we aim to achieve in relation to your young person.

Parents should know what we do and how we do it and the coaches/officials will always be on hand during, or after coaching sessions, for consultation or advice.

When appropriate, letters (or telephone contact) will be issued in relation to further information or specifics in respect of an event etc.

A regular review of City of Derry RFC policies will take place through meetings with members and Officials as well as coaches / volunteers and feedback from the young persons and parents.

Equal Opportunities Guidelines

City of Derry RFC is committed to a policy of equal treatment of all members and requires all members of whatever level to abide and adhere to this general principle and the requirements of the Codes of Practice issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission and Commission for Racial Equality.

All members are expected to abide by the requirements of the Race Relations Act 1976, Sex Discrimination Act 1986 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Specifically, the following acts of Discrimination are prohibited:

- Treating any individual on grounds of gender, colour, marital status, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin, religion, sexual orientation or disability less favourably than others.
- Expecting an individual solely on the grounds stated above to comply with requirement(s) for any reason whatsoever related to their membership, which are different from the requirements of others.
- Imposing on individual requirements which are in effect more onerous on that individual than they are on others. For example, this would include applying a condition which makes it more difficult for members of a particular race or sex to comply than others not of that race or sex.
- Victimisation of an individual
- Harassment of an individual, by virtue of discrimination
- Any other act or omission of an act, which has as its effect the disadvantaging of a member against another, or others, purely on the above grounds. Thus, in the entire Club recruitment, selection, promotion and training processes, as well as disciplinary matters, it is essential that merit, experience, skills and temperament are considered as objectively as possible.

City of Derry RFC commits itself to the immediate investigation of any claims of discrimination on the above grounds and where such is found to be the case, a requirement that the practice cease forthwith, restitution of damage or loss (if necessary) and to the investigation of any member accused of discrimination. Any member found guilty of discrimination will be instructed to desist forthwith. Since discrimination in its many forms is against the Club's policy, any members offending will be dealt with under the Club disciplinary procedure.

The Club commits itself to the equal treatment of all those with special needs. So far as reasonably practicable the club will endeavour to create access to all aspects of its sport and facilities.

Disclaimer

This Child Protection Policy is issued by City of Derry RFC to assist, guide and encourage its Members in achieving best practices for the benefit of all involved in the Game of Rugby Football. Club Members should however take their own advice as may be appropriate. City of Derry RFC cannot accept responsibility for supervising its Members and in particular liability for damage, loss or injury to person or property arising from any neglect, default or omission by any Club Members or persons acting on behalf of any Club Members.