



Lutterworth Rugby Football Club

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Child Protection Policy & Fair Play Codes of Conduct

Lutterworth RFC places the welfare and safety of children as a primary concern.

As a member of the RFU we have adopted the RFU's policy and procedures as set out on their website (<http://www.community-rugby.com/communityrugby/index.cfm> then refer to Club Management, Ethics & Equity).

We aim to create an environment in which:

- A. the youngsters in the Club and their parents can be confident that they are properly cared for and
- B. the coaches themselves operate to high standards which do not leave them exposed to criticism.

To assist and remind player, parents, spectators & Coaches of their obligations, LRFC Minis section have developed a Child Protection Policy & a Fair Play Code of Conduct to which we would expect all to abide by whether at Ashby Lane or attending away fixtures

Should any child or parent wish to raise a concern or make a complaint, they should address it to the coach or Child Welfare Officer as appropriate. Any issue raised will be handled in confidence.

Child Protection Policy

The welfare of the child is paramount. The club is committed to promoting the health and welfare of all the children ensuring that these children are secure, safe and free from neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

The role of the coaches / team manager

- It is the responsibility of the coach / team manager to report any incident of child in need or child at risk to the welfare officer.
- The coach / team manager ensures that any incident is recorded at the time including exactly what the child has said.
- The coach / team manager file all confidential reports separately from the main file and in a secure place. These notes should be passed to the welfare officers who will inform the new coach when the child changes age groups.
- All matters concerning suspected abuse should only be discussed with the welfare officer.
- If at all possible, the coach should inform the team manager or visa versa to the situation to protect themselves in a vulnerable situation.
- It is recommended that coaches do not transport players to and from match/training sessions, unless it has been arranged by prior agreement by the parent of the child.
- The coach/team manager must not have any sexual relationship with any player under the age of 18 years.

- The coach/team manager must refrain from drinking alcohol whilst working with the children.
- Must ensure that all children under the age of 18 years do not consume alcohol whilst in their care.
- To adhere to the Codes of conduct and Codes of Practice and RFU handbook.
- To ensure that all children are treated equally and without discrimination complying with the Equity policy.
- Must adhere to job description.

The role of the welfare officer

- The welfare officer will have overall responsibility for child protection.
- The welfare officer will keep reports of abuse and pass the information on to the relevant coaches.
- The welfare officer will contact the Leicestershire Lead Welfare Officer to follow the cases/concerns further.

The role of the parents

- Parents that are concerned that their child may have been abused should talk to the coach/Child Welfare Officer who will then be aware of possible changes in behaviour.

Appendix

It is vital to offer the child time to talk. If this is impossible immediately then agree on some time later.

It is crucial to listen to the child without being judgemental or expressing feelings of anger or horror too strongly. The child may well feel guilt and shame about what has happened and may have feelings of love for the abuser.

It is important to limit any questioning and be 'open-ended' in any questions you may ask. Any 'probing' and 'leading' questions could contaminate evidence, which may be needed in the future. Your role is to receive the child's story.

This Child Protection Policy will be reviewed when the RFU revised policy is published.

The Good Player's Code

Young players should recognise that many people in Rugby Union are working to provide a safe and enjoyable game in which they can develop both as a player and as an individual.

In rugby union young players are encouraged to:

- Recognise and appreciate the efforts made by coaches, parents, match officials and administrators in providing them with the opportunity to play the game and enjoy the rugby environment.
- Understand the values of loyalty and commitment to adults and teammates.
- Recognise that every young player has a right to expect their involvement in rugby to be safe and free from all types of abuse.
- Understand that if an individual or group of young players feel that they are not being treated in a manner that is acceptable, then they have a right to tell an adult either at the rugby club or outside of the game.

In rugby union, as a young player, you should:

- Play because you want to do so, not to please coaches or parents.

- Remember skill development, fun and enjoyment are the most important parts of the game.
- Be attentive at all training/coaching sessions.
- Work equally hard for yourself and your team and both will benefit.
- Recognise good play by ALL players on your team and by your opponents.
- Be a sportsman - win or lose.
- Play to the laws of the game and accept, without question, all the referee's decisions.
- Control your emotions. Verbal or physical abuse of team-mates, opponents, or match officials is *NOT ACCEPTABLE*.
- Treat all players, as you would wish to be treated. Do not interfere with, bully or take unfair advantage of any player.

The Good Parent's Code

In Rugby Union, coaches and administrators both fully acknowledge that parents are an integral part of the partnership, which ensures that young players enjoy their involvement in the sport and experience an environment in which they can flourish.

In rugby union parents are encouraged to:

- Be familiar with the coaching and training programme in order that they can ensure that their child is fully involved and the coaches are aware of their availability
- Be familiar with the teaching and coaching methods used by observing the sessions in which your child participates.
- Be aware that the club has a duty of care and therefore, where appropriate, assist coaches with the supervision of the young players, particularly where numbers are large and there is a need to transport youngsters to away games.
- Be involved with club activities and share your expertise.
- Share concerns, if you have them, with club officials.
- Be familiar with the "Good Coach's Code". In particular:
- Coaches should recognise the importance of fun and enjoyment when coaching young players
- Coaches should keep winning and losing in perspective, encouraging young players to behave with dignity in all circumstances.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT PARENTS SUPPORT COACHES IN INSTILLING THESE VIRTUES

In rugby union parents should:

- Remember that young people play rugby for their own enjoyment not that of their parents.
- Encourage young people to play - do not force them.
- Focus on the young players' efforts rather than winning or losing.
- Be realistic about the young players' ability; do not push them towards a level that they are not capable of achieving.
- Provide positive feedback both in training and during games. *REMEMBER THAT PERSISTENT, NEGATIVE MESSAGES WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT THE PLAYERS' AND REFEREE'S PERFORMANCE AND ATTITUDE.*

- Always support the rugby club in their efforts to eradicate loud, coarse and abusive behaviour from the game.
- Remember young people learn much from example.
- Always show appreciation of good play by ALL young players both from your own club and the opposition.
- Respect decisions made by the match officials and encourage the young players to do like wise.
- Ensure their child is wearing appropriate clothing for the climate.

The Good Spectator's Code

In rugby union spectators should:

- Remember children play sport for their enjoyment not yours
- Acknowledge good individual and team performance from ALL youngsters irrespective of which team they play for.
- Respect match official's decisions. *REMEMBER*, they are volunteers providing an opportunity for youngsters to play rugby,
- *NEVER VERBALLY ABUSE YOUNG PLAYERS, MATCH OFFICIALS, FELLOW SPECTATORS OR COACHES*. Such behaviour can create a negative environment for young players and their behaviour will often reflect this.
- Acknowledge effort and good performance rather the "win at all costs" ethic.
- Verbally encourage all youngsters in a positive way. If you do want to shout make sure it is "for", not "at" the players.
- Condemn bad language, rude behaviour and violence.
- Encourage all youngsters irrespective of their ability - never ridicule any individual player, regardless of the team they play for.
- Remember - "Its only a game"

The Good Coach's Code

In rugby union, coaches of young players should:

- Recognise the importance of fun and enjoyment when coaching young players.
- Understand that most learning is achieved through doing.
- Appreciate the needs of the players before the needs of the sport.
- Be a positive role model - think what this implies.
- Keep winning and losing in perspective - encourage young players to behave with dignity in all circumstances.
- Respect all referees and the decisions they make (remember it could be you refereeing next week) and ensure that the players recognise that they must do the same.
- Provide positive verbal feedback in a constructive and encouraging manner, to all young players, both during coaching sessions and games.

In rugby union, coaches of young players must:

- Provide experiences, which are matched to the young players' ages and abilities, as well as their physical and mental development.
- Ensure all youngsters are coached in a safe environment, with adequate first aid readily to hand.
- Avoid the overplaying of the best players, by using a squad system, which gives everybody a satisfactory amount of playing time.
- Never allow a player to train or play when injured.
- Ensure good supervision of young players, both on and off the field.
- Recognise that young players should never be exposed to extremes of heat, cold, or unacceptable risk of injury.
- Develop an awareness of nutrition as part of an overall education in lifestyle management.
- Recognise that it is illegal for young players under 18 to drink alcohol.
- Ensure that their knowledge and coaching strategies are up to date and in line with RFU philosophy.
- Be aware of, and abide by, the RFU recommended procedures for taking young people on residential tours at home and abroad.
- Be aware of, and abide by, the policies and procedures outlined in the RFU Policies and Procedures for the welfare of young people in Rugby Union

The Good Match Official's Code

Match officials should:

- Recognise the importance of fun and enjoyment when officiating young players.
- Provide positive verbal feedback in a constructive and encouraging manner during games.
- Emphasise the spirit of the game.
- Appreciate the needs of the young players before the needs of the sport.
- Understand the physical, social and psychological development of young players.
- Be a positive role model. You set an example, and as such, comments you receive should be positive and supportive.
- Look to self-improvement e.g. participation in Mini/Midi or National 15-a-side courses.

Match officials must:

- Recognise that the safety of young players is paramount.
- Explain decisions - all young players are still learning.
- Always penalise foul play.
- Play advantage whenever possible in order to let the game flow.
- Show empathy for the age and ability of young players.

- Be consistent and objective.
- Ensure that verbal abuse from players, coaches or spectators is not tolerated and is dealt with by club officials immediately.
- Be aware of, and abide by, the RFU Child Protection Guidance policies and procedures.

The Good Equipment Code

Studs

The most appropriate studs are the Aluminium variety which can be bought in any sports shop. Apparently Aluminium only wears down, it does not shear. The best studs to purchase are those approved by the IRB. If you ask at the sports shop they should be aware of this label. IRB stands for International Rugby Board.

The stud that presents the most problems is the metal blade. Due to the shape and the fact that children walk on them off the field of play, they have a tendency to sharpen which obviously causes a problem when playing a game like rugby. Metal blades are therefore banned. Plastic and rubber blades are acceptable though not ideal.

Normal plastic studs also present a problem. When a child walks on the tarmac with his or her boots the plastic tends to flatten and create a sharp edge around the base of the stud. However, they can be worn as long as they are checked regularly and filed down when needed.

In short metal blades must not be worn and care should be taken with all other varieties i.e. file off any sharp edges when they begin to show signs of wear.

Head Guards

These need to be IRB approved. The continuum clearly states that no other head guard should be worn. Referees are within their rights to ask a child to remove a non-IRB approved head guard.

Padded Vest

Again, only IRB approved vests may be worn. There has been particular problems with vests that have a sternum pad. Apparently if hit in this area it can cause the sternum to collapse. Again, a referee is perfectly within his rights to ask a child to remove a non IRB approved vest.

In summary do not buy anything that is not IRB approved. The RFU are very keen in this area and take the view that the child is safer without the protection than with a non-approved item. We wouldn't wish parents to waste their money.

Gum-shield

In order to protect the whole jaw gum-shields must be worn in all age groups where contact tackling takes place, i.e. age U9 upwards. They are also recommended in non-contact games such as tag rugby as accidental knocks can occur.

Shin Pads

Rugby is a physical game in which players can take knocks. Although at mini/midi rugby fly-hacking of a loose ball is not permitted, it is not unusual for a child to take a blow to their shins. As we are all aware this part of the leg is not well protected and a bang on the shin is, at the very least, extremely painful. It is therefore recommended that all players wear shin pads in order to protect themselves.