

## COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

All rugby coaches must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every young person with whom they work with and treat them equally within the context of rugby union. Do not behave in a way that discriminates against gender, race, or disability.

All rugby coaches must place the physical and emotional well-being of all young players above all other considerations, including the development of performance. Recognise the importance of fun and enjoyment when officiating or coaching young players. Provide verbal feedback in a positive way during game. Explain decisions – most young players are still learning. The relationship that a rugby coach develops with the players with whom they work must be based on mutual trust and respect. Do not overtly criticise young players or use language which may cause the player to lose confidence or self-esteem.

All rugby coaches must recognise that it is illegal for young players under eighteen to drink alcohol. Do not drink alcohol before you work, or while you are collaborating with the young players. Do not smoke when you are collaborating with the young players. Do not engage in any inappropriate contact with young players.

All rugby coaches must encourage young players to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance. Do not tolerate verbal abuse or bad language from players or supporters. Be a positive role model. Never at any time, under any circumstances should force be used to check a young player's aggressive behaviour towards you or his/her fellow players.

All rugby coaches must recognise that safety is paramount. Ensure that all equipment and facilities are safe and age appropriate. As rugby is a physical game, do not join in, you are too big! However, to reach or coach certain situations, a degree of physical contact is sometimes necessary. When this arises tell the player beforehand to gain their consent. All rugby coaches must ensure that all activities undertaken are appropriate to the age, maturity, experience, and ability of the young players. Do not allow a young player to continue playing if you have doubts about their fitness.

Do not shower with young players – agree a timetable with the other coaches.  
Do not be alone with young players at any time – if a young player comes into the dressing room ensure another adult is present.  
Do not change in the same area as young players.  
Do not make sexually explicit remarks to young players even in fun.  
Do not give a lift to a player unless there are other young people or adults in the car and the parents are aware.

Do not take a young player to your home. Where mixed teams compete away from home, at least one male and one female adult should always accompany them.

Do not administer first aid unless qualified to do so. Any player injured during a match or training session should be managed with extreme care by someone qualified to do so. It is important in the case of neck and back injuries that the player is not moved in any way and if in doubt, an ambulance called immediately. Under NO circumstances should a player complaining of neck, or back injuries be moved by those unqualified to do so and the use of stretcher should NEVER be considered.

Children must not be left unattended after training/matches, and it is the coach's responsibility to contact parents should such a situation arise.

#### Coaches must:

Familiarise yourself with Ash RFC's Safeguarding Policy and know what to do should a situation arise. Report, in writing, to the Club or Safeguarding Officer, behaviour by adults which you feel contravenes RFU Child Safeguarding Policy.

For example:

- Verbal bullying by coaches/parents/spectators.
- Physical Abuse by coaches/parents/spectators.
- Inappropriate or aggressive contact by an adult to a young person.
- Verbal abuse directed at you by young people or adults.

If you accidentally hurt a player, or cause distress in any manner, or the player appears to respond in a sexual manner to your actions, or misunderstands, or misinterprets something you have done, you must report the incident to the Club's Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible. This must also be supported by a brief written statement. Parents will also be informed of the occurrence by the Club's Safeguarding Officer. This code of conduct should be read in conjunction with the guidance set by the Rugby Football Union "The Welfare of Young People in Rugby Union Guidance." Copies of which are available from RFU website ([www.englandrugby.com](http://www.englandrugby.com)) or from **Kerris Hinton**, Ash Rugby Football Club Safeguarding Officer.

When refereeing young players, it is recommended that match officials:

- Recognise the importance of fun and enjoyment when officiating young player.
- Provide verbal feedback in a positive way during games.
- Appreciate the needs of the players.
- Be a positive role model.
- Recognise that safety is paramount.
- Explain decisions – most young players are still learning.
- Do not tolerate verbal abuse.
- Do not shower or change in the same area as young players.
- Be alone with young players at any time.
- Check studs without the coach being present.
- Administer first aid.
- Allow a young player to continue playing if you have doubts about their fitness.

- Engage in any inappropriate contact with young players.
- Make sexually explicit remarks to young players even in fun.

ALL coaches and volunteers have a responsibility to protect the children from child abuse and themselves from wrongful accusations.

There are four main types of abuse:

1. **NEGLECT:** In a rugby 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.
- unexplained weight loss
- the child is dirty and unkempt.

2. **EMOTIONAL:** In rugby situation, emotional abuse may occur when coaches:

- 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.

3. **SEXUAL:** In a rugby situation, the proximity of coaches and others, to young people provides opportunities for potential abusers to exploit their position of trust to sexually abuse.

4. **PHYSICAL:** In a rugby situation, physical abuse may occur when:

- coaches expose young players to exercise/training which disregards the player's capabilities.
- 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.

All adults who work with young people are in a position of trust, which has been invested in them by the parents, the sport and by the young people. In this position of trust, it must be recognised that there are certain boundaries in the coach player relationship that must not be crossed.

This mutual trusting relationship could mean that a child discloses overly sensitive and personal information to you. It is important that this is always managed in the correct manner to protect both the child and you. If a child tells you that someone either in or out of the rugby club environment is abusing her or him, you should;

- Listen, do not prompt, or add words.
- Reassure the child that he/she was right to tell you.

- Be Honest and explain that you will need to tell someone else to help and protect him/her.
- Share concerns with the Club's Safeguarding Officer, Club safeguarding procedures will then be followed.
- Accurately record on an incident form what the child has said to you and what action you have taken. The Club's Safeguarding Officer can help you with this.
- Confidentiality in matters relating to child protection is vital and information must only be shared with the Club's Safeguarding Officer and nominated officials.

For further information contact the club's Safeguarding Officer

**Kerris Hinton**

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**Document Reviewed By:**

**Sam Gunter (Co-Chairman)**

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