



# North Ribblesdale R.U.F.C.

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## Welfare policy Editor's notes

It is beyond any doubt that Child Protection issues are an extremely important consideration in the running of any sporting club or society which has young people among its members.

Whether or not it is considered likely that the young members of North Ribblesdale R.U.F.C. (known in future as "THE CLUB") are at risk, the stark fact remains, whether we like it or not, that the opportunity exists for a child's safety and welfare to be put at risk. This applies equally to any sporting (or other) club in which young people interact with adults who are considered to be in a position of trust.

As a club, and as individuals, "THE CLUB" and its members, coaches, officers and staff owe each and every young player an obligation to ensure their safety and welfare.

The policy, as it states in Section 2, will be "dynamic." That is to say that it will be constantly reviewed. To successfully review the policy and in order to ensure that it remains workable and relevant in all respects, the input of the managers, coaches, parents and everyone who is involved with the Club will be welcomed.

It is important that this Policy is read and understood by all coaches and those having contact with young people at "THE CLUB": they will be asked to sign an acknowledgement to the effect that they have done this and will abide by the terms of the Policy.

This Policy is not a substitute for plain "common sense." Most of what is set out in the Policy will be obvious to most, if not all, of us but cannot possibly, deal with every scenario that may present itself. Here, common sense should be used and, if in doubt, ask.

## SECTION 1 POLICY STATEMENT

"THE CLUB" recognises that the welfare of all young people is paramount and that it has a legal and moral obligation to protect all young persons whatever their age, culture, gender, disability, language, racial origin, religious belief or sexual identity from physical, emotional or sexual harm and from neglect or bullying of any kind and to ensure that a secure and safe environment is provided for the coaching and playing of rugby union by all young people.

"THE CLUB" will adopt best practice and the highest standard of care in order to ensure the safety and welfare of the young people to whom it owes a duty of care and it will work in partnership with the parents of young people wherever appropriate for the implementation of this policy."

## SECTION 2 INTRODUCTION

“THE CLUB” recognises that abuse does take place in sport and is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of all young persons to who it may owe a duty of care in order that they may enjoy rugby union in a secure and safe environment.

“THE CLUB” WILL NOT TOLERATE any form of abuse towards the young people to who it considers that it owes a duty of care.

This Policy will be facilitated by:

1. Raising awareness and understanding of the main forms of abuse and poor practice and taking all reasonable steps to ensure that incidences of suspected poor practice and abuse are reported in accordance with the terms of this policy.
2. Having in place Codes of Conduct, Policies and procedures to reinforce good practice and prevent incidents of abuse.

The Club has the following Codes and Policies:

- A Policy on Bullying (See Appendix 1)
  - An Equity Policy (See Appendix 2)
  - A Code of Conduct, Ethics and Practice for Coaches (See Appendix 3).
  - A Good Match Officials Code (See Appendix 4)
  - A Good Parents Code (See Appendix 5)
  - A Good Spectators Code (See Appendix 6)
  - A Good Players Code (See Appendix 7)
  - A Policy Statement Relating to the Photographing or Videoing of Young People (See Appendix 8)
  - A Health and Safety Policy (See Appendix 9)
3. Ensuring that procedures are in place to protect the young person first and foremost when suspected abuse or actual abuse is reported and that everyone over who “THE CLUB” has jurisdiction is aware of and understands these procedures.
  4. Ensuring that all suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
  5. Establishing reporting and disciplinary procedures should abuse be alleged and subsequently established.
  6. Appointing Child Protection Officers (“C.P.O.”) who will act as the first point of contact for concerns about the welfare of young people.
  7. Having in place practice and procedures for the recruitment and screening of staff, coaches and volunteers.
  8. Having in place and reviewing as often as is appropriate a Health and Safety Policy
  9. Ensuring that all persons involved with young people and over which the Club has jurisdiction:
    - Undertake a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure.
    - Are made aware of their responsibilities and of the terms of this Policy and will comply with its provisions.
    - Undertake relevant training as and when, in the absolute discretion of the Child Welfare Officer, it is deemed necessary.
    - Are regularly assessed by the Child welfare officer (C.W.O.) or other suitably qualified Officer of the Club with regard to the practices and procedures adopted by them in their dealings with young people.

10. Recognising that it is essential to work in partnership with the parents of young people in the review and enforcement of this policy.

This Policy will be applicable to dealings with any young person who is:

- A member of the Club whether on Club premises or any other place whilst under the control and supervision of Club personnel and
- Any other young person whilst on Club premises.

The Club accepts that matters of interpretation may arise regarding this Policy and it encourages that such matters be referred to the C.W.O. or other appropriate officer for determination and guidance.

It is recognised that in order to successfully achieve its purpose from time to time the Policy has to be dynamic and must evolve and be reviewed as regularly as is appropriate but in any event not less than once in each year. All input from those involved with young people at the Club or with relevant experience is to be welcomed.

In this Policy a “young person” is anyone who is aged 17 years or less at midnight on the 31<sup>st</sup> August immediately prior to the start of any rugby season.

### SECTION 3 RECOGNISING ABUSE AND POOR PRACTICE

Coaches and others working with young people hold this trust and may be at risk of misusing their power of the young players.

In order to provide young people with the best possible experiences and opportunities in rugby union, it is important that everyone involved operates within an accepted ethical framework and complies with the terms of this Policy and all applicable Codes of Conduct.

This will ensure that, firstly, the welfare of the young players is safeguarded and, secondly, that all relevant personnel are protected from false allegations of abuse or poor practice.

“Poor Practice” and “abuse” may not be easy to differentiate and is recognised that those involved with young people are not necessarily experts in distinguishing between the two. However, all persons involved with young people have a responsibility to act if they suspect poor practice and possible abuse by reporting their concerns in accordance with the procedures contained in this Policy.

“Poor Practice” may be considered to be any behaviour or practice which includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- Failure to fulfil the highest standard of care which is expected of a coach or other relevant person dealing with the young players or
- Contravention of the Coaches Code of Conduct, Ethics and Practice (Appendix 3) or
- Contravention of the Club’s Equity Policy (Appendix 2) or
- Infringement on the rights of the young players.

“Abuse” consists of four main types:

#### 1. Emotional Abuse

This is the persistent ill treatment of a young person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse affects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying to young people that they are worthless or inadequate. It may, also, involve children feeling frightened or that they are in danger by constantly being shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child nervous or withdrawn

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of young people.

In a rugby context, emotional abuse may occur when young people:

- Receive repeated negative feedback, criticism or are subject to name-calling, bullying or sarcasm.
- Are repeatedly ignored in their efforts to progress.
- Have consistently demanded of them performance levels beyond those of which the young person is capable.
- Are over-indoctrinated with the winning ethic.

#### 2. Neglect

This is where those responsible for young people fail, or refuse, to meet the young person's basic physical and / or psychological needs such as are likely to result in a serious impairment of the young person's health or development.

In a rugby context neglect could include young people being:

- Left alone without adequate supervision.
- Unnecessarily exposed to extremes of temperature without fluids or protection.
- Exposed to unacceptable risk of injury.
- Failing to ensure that adequate medical care is available.

### **3. Physical Abuse**

This occurs when individuals, including other young people, deliberately inflict injuries on another young person or, knowingly, do not take such steps as are reasonable, to prevent such injuries or such other injury as is reasonably foreseeable.

In a rugby context physical abuse may consist of a young person being:

- Exposed to training programmes or exercises which disregards the capacity of a young player's immature and growing body.
- Over-played or over-trained to the point of unacceptable levels of fatigue.
- Exposed to, or encouraged to consume, alcohol or performance enhancing drugs.
- Treated contrary to the Clubs Policy on Bullying

### **4. Sexual Abuse**

This consists of the use of young people to meet the sexual needs of those in a position of trust (whether male or female) or by such persons suggesting that sexual favours may help (or refusal hinder) the young persons sporting career.

Apart from forcing a young person to take part in a physical sexual activity, sexual abuse may also consist of the exposure of a young person to pornographic material.

In rugby, coaching techniques that involve physical contact with young people could, potentially, create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed.

## **SECTION 4**

### **CHILD WELFARE OFFICER**

The post of Child Welfare Officer will be appointed by "THE CLUB" and not elected. The appointed person will be suitable and demonstrate an understanding of child protection issues.

The Club will ensure that all relevant support is given to the C.W.O.

The terms of reference of the C.W.O are to be as follows:

- To ensure that the Club has Child Welfare Policy and implementation plan and that these are reviewed whenever appropriate but not less than once each year.
- To ensure that all Codes of Conduct and Policies relevant to Child Welfare are well publicised and adhered to.
- In consultation with the County Welfare Officer (or other appropriate officer of the constituent body) to ensure that all reported incidents are managed at the appropriate level and in line with R.F.U. procedures.
- To ensure that all relevant Club members are aware of training opportunities.
- To ensure that all parents are aware of the Club's Child Welfare Policy and the appropriate protocols for voicing their concerns.
- The C.W.O. will be aware of local Social Services and Area Child Protection Committee contacts.
- The C.W.O will sit on the relevant Club Committees.

**SECTION 5**  
**RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE, SUSPICIONS AND ALLEGATIONS**

**5.1. Principles**

The following principles must be adopted whenever incidences of poor practice / abuse are reported by a young person.

*“Listen and Reassure”*

**DO**

- Stay Calm. Do not rush into inappropriate action. React calmly in order to not alarm the young Person
- Reassure the young person that they are not to blame and confirm that you know how difficult it must be to confide
- Listen sympathetically to what the young person says and show that you take them seriously
- Keep questions to a minimum. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested. Only ask questions to clarify.
- Ensure that you understand what the young person has said in order that the information may be passed as accurately as possible to the appropriate agencies.
- Consult with the Club / the C.W.O. ensuring that you communicate all relevant information accurately
- Maintain confidentiality. Complete the appropriate Incident Report Form obtainable from the C.W.O. All incidents must be treated with an “open mind” and be handled in a fair and equitable manner. Confidentiality must be maintained until a case is proven
- Ensure the safety of the young person. If urgent medical attention is required, then call an ambulance, inform the paramedics of the concerns and ensure they are aware that this is a child protection issue.

**DO NOT**

Panic or allow your feelings to be evident

- Make promises that you cannot keep – explain that you will need to tell other people
- Make the young person repeat the story unnecessarily
- Delay
- Speculate or make assumptions
- Approach the alleged abuser
- Take sole responsibility

*In all cases, if you are not sure what to do, you can obtain help from the R.F.U. Child Protection Line (0208 831 6655).*

**5.2. Record**

It is important that the information that is passed to external agencies is as accurate and as helpful as possible.

Accordingly, an Incident Report Form should be submitted containing the following detail:

- The young person’s name, address, date of birth, ethnic origin and any disability that they may have.
- The nature of the allegation.
- A description of any injuries / bruising.
- Any observations about the behaviour and emotional state of the young person.
- Times, locations and dates.
- The young person’s account in their own words of what has happened.
- Actions that have been taken as a result of your concerns.
- Whether the person writing the report is expressing their own concerns or those of a third party.
- Sign and date.
- Keep a copy.
- Keep a record of the name and designation of a Social Services member of staff or police officer to whom concerns were passed.

***DO NOT INVESTIGATE ANY REPORTED INCIDENT YOURSELF***

**SECTION 6**  
**TAKING APPROPRIATE ACTION**

Allegations will often relate to “poor practice” (as defined above) where an adult’s behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing concern to a young person, the adult’s colleagues or the young person’s parents.

Poor practice is unacceptable in rugby union and will be treated seriously. Appropriate action in line with current R.F.U. regulations will *always* be taken.

**(A) Action To Be Taken If a Young Person Informs You That He / She Is Concerned About Someone’s Behaviour towards Them In the Rugby Setting.**

1. Follow the procedures set out in Sections 5.1 and 5.2 above.

2. Follow the R.F.U. procedures as follows:

- Make a full record of what has been said and heard as soon as possible.
- Inform the C.W.O. immediately.
- The C.W.O. should report the matter to the R.F.U. Ethics and Equity Manager with a copy to the C.B. Welfare Manager.

Following guidance that the issue is one of poor practice, the C.W.O. should implement the following disciplinary procedures for a first report of poor practice:

- Once the incident has been identified as poor practice and, in consultation with senior Club Officials (Including the Club Chairman, Youth Chairman and / or Minis Chairman), a decision will be made whether or not to suspend, temporarily, the person accused. Each case will be considered on its own merits.
- A disciplinary hearing may be called. The panel should be made up of three club members with regard to the following criteria:

no person who has been involved in bringing the case to the

Disciplinary hearing should sit on the panel.

Senior management of the Club must be represented.

if the case relates to poor coaching practice, experience in this field must be represented

- The accused will be advised of the report and provided with copies.
- The accused will be invited to attend the hearing which must be held at a convenient time for him/ her.
- The accused must be given sufficient advanced notice.
- The accused must be given the opportunity to offer his / her side of the story and to call witnesses.
- Once the disciplinary panel reaches a decision it should be communicated to the accused and confirmed in writing.
- A copy of the finding should be sent to the C.B. Welfare Officer and the R.F.U. Ethics and Equity Manager.
- The disciplinary panel shall have the following powers and sanctions:
  - Temporary suspension.
  - Rule that the person may coach only whilst supervised.
  - Direct that the person must undertake R.F.U. Best Practice and Child Protection Course or other such appropriate course.
  - Direct that the person must attend appropriate R.F.U. coaching course
  - Any other sanction that it considers appropriate and proportionate.

If an individual is identified by the Club as being guilty of poor practice on subsequent occasions, then the C.B. Welfare manager, in consultation with the R.F.U. Ethics and Equity Manager may conclude that the issue constitutes abuse and should be referred to the R.F.U. Disciplinary Officer. Following guidance that the issue constitutes abuse, (or if the incident or issue is of such a serious nature that there is no alternative), the C.W.O. or, if the C.W.O. is unavailable, the person reporting the incident should:

- If the young person requires immediate medical attention:

- An ambulance must be called.
- The paramedics should be informed that the concern relates to child protection.
- Refer the allegation to the police or Social Services. They will give advice relating to the contacting of parents.
- Inform the C.B. Welfare Officer and the R.F.U. Ethics and Equity Manager and forward a written report utilising the Incident Report Form available from the C.W.O. or containing the information in Section 5.2 above.

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

- The R.F.U. Ethics and Equity Manager, in consultation with the

R.F.U. Disciplinary Officer will:

- Decide whether any individual accused of abuse should temporarily be suspended pending further Social Services or police enquiries.
- Assess all individual cases under the appropriate misconduct and disciplinary procedures irrespective of the findings of the Social Services and police. There may be three types of investigation namely a Criminal investigation, a Child Protection investigation and a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

(The results of Social Services and police investigations will inform the R.F.U. disciplinary investigation).

- Seek advice from the R.F.U. Communications department as to developing a media strategy.
- Support the respective Club and C.B. Welfare Officers in all aspects, particularly the need to obtain appropriate support for affected young people, parents and members of staff.
- Where allegations are unfounded, the R.F.U. will work in a professional manner to ensure that the person concerned is given appropriate support to continue his or her work in rugby.

**(B) Action To Be Taken if You Become aware Through Your Own Observations or Through A Third Party of Possible Abuse Occurring At A Young Persons Home or In Some Other Setting (Outside of Rugby)**

The following are indicators of abuse although the presence of one or more of them is not proof that the young person is being abused.

**Physical Abuse**

- Current unexplained injuries.
- Inappropriate excuses to explain injury.
- Untreated injuries.
- Fear of returning home.
- Aggression towards others

**Neglect**

- Constant hunger and tiredness.
- Poor personal hygiene.
- Poor state or inappropriate clothing.
- Frequent lateness or absence from coaching sessions.
- Low self-esteem.
- Poor peer relationships.

**Emotional Abuse**

- Low self-esteem.
- Decline in concentration levels.
- Continual self-deprecation.

- Emotional immaturity.
- Extremes of behaviour.

## Sexual Abuse

- Unexplained changes in behaviour.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.
- Distrust of adults.
- Inappropriate language.

Sometimes changes in behaviour may relate to other significant events in a young persons life such as bereavement, internal family difficulties or bullying.

Working in partnership with parents and ensuring positive communication will help to ensure that reasons for changes in behaviour can be identified and action taken to support the young person. If abuse is suspected, you should ensure the safety of the young person. If he or she requires immediate treatment, call an ambulance and inform the paramedics of your concerns and ensure they are aware that this is a child protection issue.

R.F.U. procedures should then be followed.

- Refer to Sections 5.1 and 5.2 of this policy.
- Report your concerns to the C.W.O.
- The C.W.O. may seek advice from the R.F.U. Ethics and Equity Manager, the C.B. Welfare Manager, the R.F.U. Child Protection Helpline or the N.S.P.C.C. If there is any delay in receiving advice, contact must be made with the Social Services.
- If a formal referral is made, make it clear to Social Services or the police that this is a child protection referral
- All police forces have dedicated Child Protection Teams (C.P.T's) which deal with allegations of abuse within the family setting and by people in a position of trust. In a real emergency dial 999.
- Parents carers should only be contacted following advice from Social Services.

*Non-action is not an option. The welfare of the young person is paramount. Delay in acting can increase the risk to the child*

In all cases, please always remember the following:

- It is often more difficult for some young people to disclose abuse than others. Young people from ethnic minorities may have regularly experienced racism, which may lead them to believe that certain groups, including those in positions of authority, does not really care about their well-being. They may well feel they have good reason to question whether the response may be different
- Disabled young people may have to overcome additional barriers before feeling that they can disclose abuse. They may rely on the abuser for their daily care and not know of alternative sources of care. The abuse may be the only attention / affection that they have experienced. There may be communication differences and they will almost certainly have to overcome prejudices which block our willingness to believe they may be abused or to use their medical condition to explain away indicators which in a non-disabled young person would concern us.

*These groups of people need us to be extra vigilant and to give thought as to how we will respond*

## SECTION 7

### RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND SCREENING OF STAFF, COACHES AND VOLUNTEERS

The Club recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse young people in some way and it is important that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

It is essential that the same procedure is used consistently throughout the game.

Under the Protection of Children Act 1999, all individuals working on behalf of the R.F.U. / R.F.U.W. are treated as employees whether paid or volunteers.

The Club will carry out the following recruitment checks:

#### 1. Advertising

If any form of advertising is used to recruit staff, it will reflect:

- The responsibilities of the role
- The level of experience or qualification required (e.g. working with children an advantage.)
- The R.F.U. stance on child protection

#### 2. Applications

All adults who are in contact with young people, whether paid or voluntary should complete a prescribed application form.

#### 3. Checks and References

3.1 All adults who have “regular supervisory contact with young people” will undertake a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure. These adults will include:

- Professional staff
- All Managers, coaches and assistant coaches.
- Heads of the mini/midi and youth rugby sections.
- All referees who manage mini/midi and youth games.
- The C.W.O.
- Physiotherapists and First Aiders

3.2 A minimum of two written references should be taken up and at least one should be associated with former work with young people. If an applicant has no experience of working with children, training is strongly advised.

#### 4. Interview and Induction

- Where appropriate, all professional appointments for full or part time positions should undergo a formal interview.
- All staff, whether paid or voluntary, must undergo a formal or informal induction in which:
  - Coaching qualifications, if applicable, are verified.
  - Training needs are identified.
  - The Club’s Child Welfare Policy and Codes of Conduct and Codes of Practice are explained to the applicant and he or she agrees to abide by and enforce the terms thereof.
  - The roles, responsibilities and expectations of the job are clarified.
  - The Club’s Child Protection procedures are explained and training needs established.

#### 5. Training

Appropriate training will enable individuals to recognise their responsibilities with regard to their own good practice and the reporting of poor practice or concerns of possible abuse.

The Club will ensure that:

- All adults who have regular contact with young people complete the “R.F.U. Guide to Best Practice in Child Protection” course.
- All adults who have a coaching responsibility for young people attend an appropriate R.F.U. coaching course

*It is vital that all staff working with young people in rugby union are conversant with player-centred coaching techniques and are able to display an ability to work with young people safely and effectively.*

#### 6. Monitoring and Approval

All staff and volunteers will, at regular intervals, be given the opportunity to receive formal or informal feedback. This will enable the Club to:

- Identify training needs
- Set new goals
  
- Highlight concerns about inappropriate behaviour

## SECTION 8

### THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS AND CARERS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The Club recognises that the involvement of the parents of its young players is vital in order to establish an adequate policy for the welfare and protection of its young players.

If, therefore, any parent has a complaint or concern about any aspect of the Club's policies, codes of conduct and Child Welfare Policy, they are encouraged to contact the C.W.O. or other appropriate Officer of the Club such as the Chairs of the Youth or Mini's sections or the young players team manager.

Should the parents concerns relate to allegations of poor practice or possible abuse, the procedures set out in Section 6 above should be adopted.

Parents will agree to familiarise themselves with and comply with the provisions of the "Good Parents Code" in Appendix 5 and the "Good Spectators Code" in Appendix 6.

The Club requires parents to authorise the Club to act in loco parentis when the parents are not able to be present and the parents will sign any requisite consents and authorities authorising Club officers to act in such manner as they deem reasonably necessary for the health and safety of their children.

From a behavioural aspect, parents must not use extreme behaviour either on the side of the pitch or in the Clubhouse whilst young people are about. Such behaviour may cause distress to the young people and is harmful to the image of the Club.

Should a parent use such behaviour the Club will sanction the temporary or permanent removal of the parent from Club premises and, if applicable, terminate the parent's membership of the Club without refund of the membership fee paid.

#### **Supervision of Young People**

No young player in the fewer than 6, fewer than 7 and fewer than 8 sections may be left unattended at the Club.

The parent or an alternative appointed adult should remain with the young person at the Club at all times.

If a parent has to leave the Club for any reason during a training session or match, a suitable adult should be appointed to supervise the young person. The situation should be reported to the manager of the young player's team and the adult assuming responsibility for the child should be identified to the manager.

#### **Medical Conditions**

The Club needs to be aware of any ailments or injuries that a young person might suffer from as this may affect what activities they may undertake.

Parents must, therefore, complete the medical questions on the registration form and must, also, advise the young person's team manager should the young person suffer from any illness or injury during the course of the season.

If you feel for any reason that your child is not fit to partake in training or play a game, you must not send them to the Club.

If the young person does have a minor injury which is not sufficiently serious to prevent them from training or playing, the relevant injury must be properly and appropriately dressed and treated.

#### **First Aid Cover and Medical Care**

The Club will ensure that there are qualified First Aiders on hand to deal with minor injuries.

For serious injuries sustained by a young player whilst training / playing at the Mill Road Sports Ground, the Accident and Emergency unit of the Colchester District General Hospital, Turner Road, will be used wherever possible.

Where practicable, you will be asked to go with your child in the ambulance. However, if you are not available, the Club will assume that it may act in loco parentis and take whatever steps it considers reasonably necessary for the care and welfare of your child. An acknowledgement to this effect will be signed by the parents when completing the young person's registration form.

If a young person becomes unwell or is injured whilst under the supervision of the Club and it is the opinion of a First Aider and the young person's team Manager that it would be to the young person's detriment to remain on site, the following procedure will be adopted:

- The young person will be removed from activities that are likely to cause a deterioration in the young persons health or physical condition and, if deemed necessary (by the young persons parents in the first instance or a proper officer of the Club if the parents are not immediately available), taken to hospital accompanied by at least two officers of the Club.
- If applicable, the Club will contact the young person's parents and inform them of the situation
- The incident will be recorded by the young persons team manager and / or coach and / or the First Aider in the Club's Accident Report Book and on the Incident Record Form (Appendix 9).
- If the parents of the young person cannot be contacted, the Club will ensure that an appropriate person remains with the young person at all times until a parent is able to take over supervision.

## Concussion

This is a very serious condition and has quite specific symptoms.

Any young person who suffers concussion will automatically be rested from training and matches for a minimum of three weeks. The young person will only be permitted to return to rugby after this time if they have a written certificate from their Doctor that it is safe for them so to do.

Returning players will not immediately take part, if applicable, in contact rugby. They will be “eased” back into the game whilst their team manager assesses their condition and ensures that it is safe for them to resume the game proper.

If your child suffers a head injury away from the Club, you must report this to your child’s team manager. If you do not inform the Club of such an injury, the Club will assume that it is safe for your child to train or play.

If a head injury is suffered whilst training or playing, such injury will, for the avoidance of doubt, be considered as possible concussion unless there is a compelling reason to conclude that the injury has not resulted in concussion.

A player sustaining such an injury will immediately be suspended from further training or play and will be released to his or her parent with a request that medical advice is immediately sought. This is irrespective of the wishes of the parent or manager of the child: the welfare of the child is paramount.

## Children Taking Medication

Young people who take medication of any kind will be responsible for administering it themselves: under no circumstances will any manager, coach or other officer of the Club accept responsibility for securing or administering a young persons medication.

If medication is brought to the Club, it must be clearly labelled with the young persons name and must clearly identify the contents.

Notwithstanding the above, the Club will encourage managers, coaches and First Aiders to exercise a “common sense” approach to the administration and handling of medication on a case-by-case basis.

## SECTION 9 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Club will have close regard to its health and safety responsibilities and will carry out formal risk assessments at least once in each season to ensure the safe and competent coaching of rugby.

## APPENDIX 1 POLICY ON BULLYING

“THE CLUB” takes seriously the problems caused by bullying and is committed to providing an environment in which bullying or any other form of harassment are not tolerated in any form.

The Club will ensure that all of its members (which include its employees, coaches, players, officials, volunteer helpers and parents) subscribe to, and agree to be bound by, the Club’s policy on bullying and will ensure that its members acknowledge that they have a duty to ensure that the policy is observed by others.

It is appreciated that “bullying” is not always easy to define and may not necessarily consist of an isolated incident of an adult abusing a young person.

Bullying usually takes place over a period of time and the bully may be an adult as well as a young person.

Three main types of bullying exist

### 1. Physical

Examples include:

- Hitting.
- Kicking.
- Unwanted physical contact.
- Theft.
- Any other form of violence.

### 2. Verbal

Examples include:

- Racist or homophobic remarks.
- Name-calling.
- Sarcasm.
- Spreading rumours.

### 1. Tormenting.

- Ridiculing.
- Taunting.
- Abusive or offensive comments of a sexual nature.

### 3. Emotional

Examples include:

- Threats.

- Persistent negative feedback.

Bullying behaviour will also include:

- Deliberate hostility and aggression towards the victim and
- A victim who is physically or emotionally weaker than the bully and
- An outcome which is always painful and distressing for the victim

Examples of bullying include but are not limited to:

- A parent who pushes their child too hard.
- A coach who adopts a “win at all costs” philosophy.
- A player who intimidates others.
- An official who is over-officious.

It is the duty of each member of the Club to report any incident or suspicion of bullying to the C.W.O. and to complete the Incident Report Form (Appendix 9) or such other Form as shall be required.

Upon receipt of such report, the C.W.O. will;

- Take and treat each such report seriously
- Investigate the incident
- Talk, separately and in confidence, to the victim and the bully
- Take whatever further action is considered to be necessary
- Provide support for the victim
- Liaise with the Chairman of the Club and the Chairman of the Section (Youth or Mini) to which the victim and the bully belong.

If the victim and the bully are both young persons and the C.W.O. considers that the incident so warrants it, the C.W.O. may deal the matter in one or more of the following ways namely:

- By ensuring that the bully apologise to the victim.
- Informing the parents of the bully.
- Insisting upon the return of any items “borrowed” or stolen.
- By dealing with the matter in any other appropriate manner and proportionately to the seriousness of the incident.

If either the victim or the bully is an adult (although the incident is not considered by the C.W.O. to constitute “Poor Practice” or “Abuse” for which separate procedures are prescribed) or if both the victim and bully are young persons and the incident is considered by the C.W.O. to be serious the C.W.O. must refer the matter, as soon as is reasonably practicable, to a disciplinary panel which will convene within five working days to consider the matter.

The Disciplinary panel should be made up of three Club members with regard to the following criteria:

- No person who has been involved in bringing the case to the disciplinary hearing should sit on the panel.
- The Executive Committee of the Club must be represented

The Disciplinary Panel will consider the matter having regard to any representations that it may seek from any relevant parties.

The parent of any young person involved will be informed of the progress and outcome and invited to make representations to the Disciplinary Panel.

Sanctions that may be imposed by the Disciplinary Panel include but are not limited to the following:

- Permanent or temporary exclusion from the Club or pitch side.
- Conditions imposed upon attendance (e.g. must be accompanied by parent).
- Person may only coach whilst supervised.

In conclusion, it is accepted that rugby union is a physical game and one during which emotions can “run high” both in training and in match situations. As a result there will inevitably be isolated incidents caused by a lack or breakdown of discipline.

It is, however, possible, by using common sense, to distinguish such incidents from pre-meditated or orchestrated incidents of bullying. It is the latter incidents that have to be eradicated from all aspects of the game if we are to continue to attract young people to the game and to ensure that they are allowed to develop to the best of their ability within it.

## APPENDIX 2 Equity Policy statement

- The club respects the rights, dignity and worth of every person and will **treat everyone equally within the context of their sport, regardless of age, ability, gender, race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexuality or social/economic status.**
- The club is committed to everyone having the right to enjoy their sport in an environment free from threat of intimidation, harassment and abuse.
- All club members have a responsibility to oppose discriminatory behaviour and promote equality of opportunity.
- The club will deal with any incidence of discriminatory behaviour seriously, according to club disciplinary procedures.
- We will protect the rights and development needs of the individual whilst balancing this with the needs of the group as a whole.
- This club is committed to ensuring that equity is incorporated across all aspects of its development. In doing so it acknowledges and adopts the following Sport England definition of sports equity:

***Sports equity is about fairness in sport, equality of access, recognising inequalities and taking steps to address them. It is about changing the culture and structure of sport to ensure it becomes equally accessible to everyone in society.***

## APPENDIX 3 CODE OF CONDUCT, ETHICS AND PRACTICE FOR COACHES OF YOUNG PERSONS

### Coaches

- Recognize the importance of fun and enjoyment when coaching young players.
- Consider the wellbeing and safety of participants.
- 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 recognize that they must do the same.
- Develop an appropriate working relationship with players, based on mutual trust and respect.
- Make sure all activities are appropriate to the age, ability and experience of those taking part.
- Promote the positive aspects of the sport (e.g. fair play, team spirit)
- Display consistently high standards of behaviour.
- Follow all guidelines laid down by the national governing body and the club.
- Provide positive verbal feedback in a constructive and encouraging manner, to all young players, both during coaching sessions and games.
- Recognize the importance of fun and enjoyment when officiating young players.
- Emphasize the spirit of the game.
- Understand the physical, social and psychological development of young players.
- Look to self-improvement e.g. participation in Mini/Midi coaching courses.
- Never exert undue influence over performers to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- 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.
- 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.

- Recognize that young players should never be exposed to extremes of heat, cold, or unacceptable risk of injury.
- Ensure that their knowledge and coaching strategies are up to date.
- Recognize that the safety of young players is paramount.
- Explain decisions - all young players are still learning.
- Always penalize 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

#### APPENDIX 4 GOOD MATCH OFFICIALS CODE

When refereeing young players, match officials should:

- Recognise the importance of fun and enjoyment
- Be consistent and objective
- Be supportive of and encourage the young players: provide positive verbal feedback during games
- Always penalise foul play
- Play advantage whenever possible in order to let the game flow
- Emphasize the spirit of the game
- Appreciate the needs of the players before the needs of the sport
- Understand the physical and behavioural development of the young players
- Be a positive role model
- Recognise that the safety of players is paramount
- Explain decisions: most young players are still learning and both the young players and parents will understand the game better
- Never tolerate verbal abuse

Officials should not:

- Change in the same area as young players
- Shower with young players: agree a timetable with the managers / coaches
- Be alone with young players at any time: if a young player comes in to the dressing room, ensure another adult is present
- Check a young players studs or other playing apparel without the player's Manager / coach being present
- Administer First Aid
- Allow a young player to continue playing if there are doubts about their fitness
- Tolerate bad language from young players
- Engage in any inappropriate contact with young players
- Give a lift to a player unless there are other young people or adults in the vehicle and the parents are aware
- Take a young player to your home
- Overly criticise young players or use language which may cause a young player to lose confidence or self-esteem
- Make sexually explicit remarks to young players, even in fun.

Officials must always

- Be aware of, and abide by, the R.F.U. Child Protection Guidance policies and procedures and report in writing, to the Club's C.W.O. or C.B. Welfare Officer and / or Society Secretary, behaviour by adults which you feel contravenes such policies and procedures. This includes:
  - Verbal bullying by coaches, parents or spectators.
  - Physical abuse by coaches, parents or spectators.
  - Inappropriate or aggressive contact by an adult to a young person.
  - Verbal abuse directed at the official by young people or adults
- Officiate to the rules laid down in the Rugby Continuum and keep them updated on rule changes
- Check that the home Club has provided a qualified First Aider, ambulance access has not been obstructed and that appropriate equipment is available along with someone trained in its use before starting play
- Before training sessions and matches, check that studs and other clothing are safe and in accordance with the I.R.B. Laws of the Game.

## APPENDIX 5 GOOD PARENTS CODE

### PARENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO:

- Be familiar with the coaching and training programme in order that you can ensure that your 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.
- Remember that young people play rugby for their own enjoyment not that of their parents.
- Encourage young people to play - never force an unwilling child to play...
- Be realistic about the young players' abilities; do not push them towards a level that they are not capable of achieving.
- Provide positive verbal feedback both in training and during the game.
- 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 by example.
- Always show appreciation of good play by all young players both from your own club and the opposition. Always applaud good play by either team.
- Respect decisions made by the match officials and encourage the young players to do likewise. 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 than 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.
- Encourage all youngsters irrespective of their ability - never ridicule any individual player, regardless of the team for whom they play. Never scold or ridicule a child for making a mistake during the game.
- Always encourage your child to play by the laws of the game.
- Supporters/Parents are requested to set a good example to the young players.
- Foster enthusiastic participation.
- Do not encroach onto the field of play. Coaches and referees are qualified to be there. If you want to get involved in Mini-Rugby, join them and learn how.
- Encourage respect for referees and line judges. Do not publicly question decisions or honesty. Like the coaches, he is a volunteer and unpaid. He has given up his spare time. If you abuse him, he might not return. And how can your child play Mini-Rugby without a referee?

**APPENDIX 6**  
**GOOD SPECTATORS CODE**

Young rugby players are impressionable and their behavior will often reflect that of the adults around them. In Rugby Union we welcome spectators on our touchlines who embrace the ethos of the game as one of FUN, ENJOYMENT and SKILL DEVELOPMENT.

**IN RUGBY UNION SPECTATORS ARE ENCOURAGED TO:**

- Act as positive role models to all young players.
- Be familiar with, and abide by, the RFU Child Protection Guidance in relation to verbal and emotional abuse.
- Respect the rugby club policy with regard to spectator behavior

**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 behavior can create a negative environment for young players and their behavior will often reflect this.

- Acknowledge effort and good performance rather than the "win at all costs" ethic.
- Verbally encourage all youngsters in a positive way. If you do .Condemn bad language, rude behavior and violence.
- Encourage all youngsters irrespective of their ability – never ridicule any individual player, regardless of the team they play for.

**APPENDIX 7**  
**GOOD PLAYERS CODE**

**PLAYERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO:**

- Recognise and appreciate the efforts made by coaches, parents, match officials and administrators in providing the opportunity for you to play the game and enjoy the rugby environment.
- Understand the values of loyalty and commitment to adults and team mates.
- Recognize that every young player has a right to expect their involvement in rugby to be safe and free from all types of abuse.

**PLAYERS SHOULD:**

- Play because you want to do so, not to please coaches or parents.
- Remember that skill development, fun and enjoyment are the most important parts of the game.
- Be attentive at all training and coaching sessions.
- Work equally hard for yourself and your team - both will then benefit.
- Recognize good play by all players on your team and by your opponents.
- Be a sportsman, recognize good rugby - win or lose.
- Play to the Laws of the Game and accept, without question, all referees' decisions.

- Control your emotions. Verbal or physical abuse of team mates, opponents, or match officials is not acceptable.
- Treat all players, as you would like to be treated. Do not interfere with, bully or take advantage of any player.
- Improve your skill
- Never give up
- Don't argue with the referee he won't change his decision, and might penalize your team - for arguing.
- Play by the Rules, don't cheat.
- Don't show off - even when you've scored, recognize the effort of the other players

### APPENDIX 8 POLICY ON PHOTOGRAPHING AND VIDEOING OF YOUNG PERSONS

Any person wishing to photograph Youth Players at North Ribblesdale RUFC should identify themselves to the team coaching staff; explain their reason for taking photographs and their relationship to the player(s) before commencing photography.

Any parent or guardian of a child under court order protection or who do not want their child photographed for any reason should make themselves and the child known to the team Head Coach/Manager. The Club will then undertake to take all reasonable steps to ensure the child is not photographed whilst playing or training at the club.

The Club undertakes to gain the consent of any child and their parent/guardian before a photograph in which the child can be individually identified is published in the press or on websites by the club.

All Club officials are required to challenge anyone they suspect of not having permission, taking photographs of youth players on the club pitches and premises. The official should request the photographer explain their reason for taking photographs and their relationship to the player(s). However it should be noted that all the pitches and land surrounding the club are public places. If the photographer gives an inappropriate answer or refuses to answer when challenged, Club officials should request the photographer stops and or leaves, but may take no other action.

**CAMERAS ARE NOT PERMITTED IN CHANGING AREAS**

### APPENDIX 9 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The Club is run solely by unpaid volunteers and whilst it has no statutory responsibility as an employer as defined by the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, it aims to emulate the standards demanded by Health & Safety Legislation.

Exercise is essential for a growing child. Children who take regular exercise are physically healthier. In addition to the physical benefits, mini & junior rugby aims to provide an environment in which children can learn and advance their social development. It is our goal to make that sporting environment as safe as possible.

There are two types of "risk" playing Rugby Union. They are:

Inherent Risks which are those considered to be part and parcel of the game. They are inevitable and acceptable, resulting from a player's decision to participate in a contact sport.

Unacceptable Risks which are those not inherent to the sport! All those who take part in Rugby Union, including officers, referees, coaches and administrators, must be able to recognize and understand their legal responsibilities, and young players too must recognize their responsibilities to safeguard the well-being of those with whom they are taking part.

The aim is to maintain the highest reduction of injury possible. Accepting that not all injuries can be avoided, those that are preventable, the unacceptable risks, must be eliminated.

Fortunately the vast majority of injuries are minor bruises and abrasions, but the risk of more serious injuries is a concern to all parents. Coaches/Match Officials

1. The risk of injury is less when children learn the skills in a structured way. Therefore ensure that there is at least one RFU qualified and CRB checked referee and/or coach available at each age group training session or match.

### Clothing

2. The referee's decision (or lead coach's if training) is final!
3. *Prior to playing or training ALL jewellery, watches should be removed and players should not wear any items of clothing that may pose a risk of injury to themselves or others.*
4. Appropriate protective clothing should be worn and conform to the recommendations of the IRB.
5. The Club strongly advises parents/guardians to ensure that their child wears a mouth guard at all times when playing/training.
6. Glass lenses in spectacles should not be worn.

### Match Pitch Safety

7. The referee will ensure that the pitch is marked and flags positioned correctly before commencing play.
8. The referee will, if applicable, ensure that the posts are secure in the ground before commencing play.
9. The referee will, if applicable, ensure that the post protectors will be fitted securely and in a good state of repair before commencing play.
10. The referee will determine whether the ground is playable (e.g. not frozen or hard-baked, no potholes, not waterlogged etc.) and may impose such restrictions as necessary to facilitate play.
11. The referee will ensure that the ground is free of foreign objects such as glass, concrete, large stones and dog waste before commencing play.

### Playing

12. The lead coach should ensure that players have an appropriate warm-up before and after play or training to reduce the risk of injury.
13. The lead coach will ensure that players are sufficiently hydrated prior to participating and that there is sufficient water to be made freely available to all participants during and after the match or training session.
14. Alcohol is strictly forbidden and therefore should not be consumed before or during any event.
15. All players and teams have a responsibility to know and understand the rules of the game together with the skills and tactics to ensure safe play – any action which places either yourself or others at unacceptable risk of injury may be subject to disciplinary procedure as defined by the RFU Continuum.

### First Aid

16. ALL team coaches/officials should be aware of the location of the nearest emergency telephone and first aid kit.
17. First aid trained personnel are generally available on site but this should be checked before play commences by the head coaches.
- 18 Visiting teams must be prepared to supply and use their own first aid kit.

### Equipment

19. Playing areas and 'fixed' and moveable equipment should be checked by the relevant lead coach before play commences and any concerns raised prior to play (see Match Pitch Safety above).
20. No club equipment should be used without an appropriately trained coach being present.

### Accident Reports

21. ANY modifiable accident, as defined by the RFU, must be recorded on the Injury Event Form (available on the website) and passed to the Child Protection Officer by the relevant Lead Coach as soon as possible and in any case within 24 hours.
22. No young person will leave the training session/match to attend hospital without an appropriate parent or guardian. It is the responsibility of the relevant lead coach to nominate someone if the parent/guardian cannot be located, and to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the injured player's parent/guardian is notified as soon as possible.

**REMEMBER, ALWAYS PLAY SAFELY!**