

# ■ Guidelines for Best Practice in Clubs

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01

## ■ Administration & Regulations

Once a commitment to the IRFU Child Welfare Policy has been enshrined within a club's constitution, then all rules and regulations will stem from this. The way we work with children, how we behave around them and our attitudes towards them will contribute to the way young people feel about themselves.

An examination of existing structures, rules and regulations should help provide a framework for creating and maintaining a child-centered approach within the club.

### **Committees**

Age Grade Committee members should ideally sit for a fixed period of time (3 Years) to encourage a regular turnover of the committee members.

The committee should have a mix of experienced and new members.

Ensure committee members have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and that members operate only within these roles. Avoid situations where one or more members operate in isolation from the committee.

A database of record keeping should be established that allows confidentiality, but continuity between changing committee members.

List a calendar of meetings and circulate to clubs and all members in advance of the season.

Members should sign an annual membership form that includes signing up to the IRFU Child Welfare Policy Document.

List in the rules and regulations of the Club, the complaints, disciplinary and appeals procedures that members should also sign up to.

### **Rules and Regulations**

Always have appropriate adult /child ratios (review this with insurance company).

List all procedures for away trips for age grade members.

Members under 18 years of age must be encouraged to wear protective gear (check IRB web site: [www.irb.com](http://www.irb.com)).

Members under 16 years of age should not play on more than one team in any one season without prior parental or guardian consent.

List any criteria for selection to squads; regional, provincial and national.

### **Rules relating to Sport Leaders (please note the following is a non-exhaustive list. Regard should be had to 4.1 Irish Sports Council 'Code of Ethics and Good Practices for Children's Sport':**

Always try to work with other adults present and avoid situations where you are alone with individual children.

Identify aspects of necessary physical contact e.g. scrum and tackle. Let parents know of these conditions so that behaviors cannot be misinterpreted.

Ensure that travel arrangements are set out in advance and known by all. Where possible, leaders should not travel alone with children.

Where mixed teams compete away from home, ensure the group is accompanied by at least one male and one female adult, preferably a parent.

Always ensure the well being and safety of the players at all times.

### **Avoid**

Spending too much time with any one participant away from others.

Taking young people on journeys alone.  
Taking young people to your home.

Taking sessions alone if at all possible.

### **Never**

Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay.

Share a room with a child alone.

Permit or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.

Permit children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.

Make sexually suggestive comments to a child.

Allow allegations made by a child to go unrecorded and not acted upon.

Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves.

Agree to meet a player on your own.

Undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) while training young people.

Exert due influence over a child in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.

### **Procedures for Clubs**

Each club should have clear procedures for responding to reports or concerns relating to the welfare and safety of children.

Clubs should ensure that all procedures regarding safety in sport for children must be available and visible to all members in the club.

All sports leaders, children, parents/ guardians should be aware of how to report and to whom concerns should be reported within the club.

Copies of the Child Welfare Policy document and its accompanying leaflets for Parents, Coaches and Club Committees should be widely distributed within clubs.

Copies of the Statutory Authority guidelines should be available in all Clubs.

Everyone involved in child welfare matters should be aware of their responsibility to work in co-operation with the statutory child protection authorities.

## Substance Abuse

### Alcohol

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. Adults should ensure young people are aware of the dangers of alcohol abuse.

### Considerations

Establish a written policy regarding alcohol and the Age-Grade players in the club.

Ensure Age-Grade players know when they are allowed or not allowed in the bar areas of the club.

Limit the opportunities where Age-Grade players could be exposed to alcohol.

Support IRFU and Government policy on under-age drinking.

Support all programmes in the community to prevent under-age drinking.

Be aware of legislation regarding the use of alcohol and young people.

Find out about the availability of alcohol to under-age players in the community.

Educate players about the dangers of alcohol use, addiction and abuse.

### Teach young people

What the law is regarding under-age drinking.

Not to travel in a car with any one who has taken any alcohol.

Not to participate in 'drinking games'.

To be able to say 'No' and refuse a drink.

The implications to health when consuming alcohol.

To be able to put a drink down if they don't want it.

That there is no quick way to sober up.

Drinking influences judgement.

Under-age drinking is against the Law.

### Adults

Adults have a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that young players don't get involved in under age drinking.

Clubs must not supply alcohol to persons under 18 yrs of age, nor permit any person under 18 yrs of age to consume alcohol on rugby club premises.

All Clubs should have a clear written policy, visible to all visitors to the club, regarding the use of alcohol and under-age individuals.

### 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 affect 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 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 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.

### **Smoking**

Smoking should be avoided by the Rugby player. Smoking is a serious health risk. It should play no part in a player's lifestyle.

Clubs must enforce statutory requirements in relation to smoking on the premises.

### **Drugs**

Clubs must enforce statutory requirements in relation to prohibited substances and illegal drugs.

The consequences of drug taking, addiction and substance abuse may be fatal and every effort should be taken to ensure they play no part in a player's lifestyle.

All prescription medication must be utilized under appropriate medical supervision and due care and attention must be enforced when dealing with requirements relating to such medication.

### **Sports Supplements and the Young Player**

Young rugby players should focus on good eating and drinking practices to support optimum performance. Fact sheets to support this are available through the IRFU at [www.irishrugby.ie/eat2compete](http://www.irishrugby.ie/eat2compete).

The use of protein supplements should not be recommended by schools, coaches, teachers or others involved in the training of young rugby players.

The IRFU strongly advises against the use of nutritional ergogenic aids, in particular creatine, in young rugby players under 18 years of age.

Young rugby players with medical conditions (for example diabetes, asthma, celiac disease and nutritional allergies) should receive appropriate medical and nutritional advice to assist their optimum performance.

The full leaflet on Sports Supplements and the Young Players is available on [www.irishrugby.ie/supplements](http://www.irishrugby.ie/supplements).

## 03 Bullying

### Types of bullying

(this list is non-exhaustive and serves only as a guide)

Name calling.

Spreading harmful rumours about others.

Exclusion from activities.

Intentionally isolating another person from conversation or during activity.

Threatening or intimidating behaviour.

Taking or damaging property or belongings.

Physical assault or causing physical harm.

Making a person do things they don't want to.

Threatening or abusive text messaging and or abuse through network sites on the internet.

### Occurs Between

Child to child - physical aggression, verbal bullying, intimidation, damage to property and isolation.

Adult to child - includes the repeated use of gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidatory nature or any comment intended to degrade the child.

Child to adult - includes the use of repeated gestures or expressions of threatening or intimidatory nature by an individual child or group of children.

### Dealing with Bullying?

More extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reportable to Health Service Executive or An Garda Siochana or the PSNI.

It is the responsibility of the club to deal with bullying that may take place. Each club should have a clear policy on bullying which should be known to all members and will be implemented by all coaches and volunteers in the club. Incidents must be dealt with immediately and should not be tolerated.

### Suggestions for Clubs

Ensure the safety and security of all their players at all times.

Support efforts in the community to combat bullying.

Support IRFU and Government's policies on the subject.

Encourage an awareness of what bullying is and how to avoid it.

Encourage a mature and measured attitude towards bullying so that age grade players know how to deal with it effectively.

Assure the victim that nothing is wrong with them and it is not their fault.

Establish if bullying takes place in the club and if required address the problem in the right manner.

Be committed to ensure the safety and security of all players.

Bullying in whatever form is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

Have a clear written policy, visible in the club, preventing and dealing with bullying.

**Strive to Provide a Place Where**  
Name calling will not be tolerated.

No one suffers abuse of any nature.

No one is victimised.

Each member is supported and listened to.

All members are treated equally.

Solutions to problems are the concern of all.

## ■ Hosting a Match or Event at Your Club

To ensure players, management and spectators enjoy the experience when involved with a match it is important for clubs, when hosting fixtures, to ensure all arrangements are in place and that all involved are informed of these arrangements before the event.

### **Suggestions for Hosting a Match or Event**

#### **Administration**

Obtain permission from the Branch to play the fixture.

Inform the Club Management Committee of the match and of the facility requirements for the match.

Request Match Official(s) from the Branch Referee Association with sufficient notice.

Inform the visiting team of any arrangements or club protocol regarding their visit in the week leading up to the match.

Inform match official(s) in good time regarding postponement(s) or cancellation(s).

In the event of a competitive match the Youth Coordinator to inform the Fixture Secretary of the result of the match within the agreed time.

#### **Medical**

An individual with first aid experience/training should be in attendance.

If possible have a doctor present at the match.

The doctor should identify himself to the match official.

Inform the nearest hospital accidental and emergency department about the match.

If possible have an ambulance at the match, if not, ensure one can be contacted and arrive at the club in very little time.

Ensure ambulance access to the playing area.

A spinal board, hard neck collar & first-aid kit should be available in every medical room.

Ice bags to be available on the side line.

Medical room to be available with appropriate equipment.

#### **Facilities**

Ensure the clubhouse facilities are open to supporters and club officials.

Changing facilities must be open and clean for all participants.

Toilet and showers to be clean and available.

Post match refreshments should be sufficient, depending on the fixture and protocol involved for the match or competition.

The playing area should be clean, safe and marked for the match. Touch line flags and post protectors should be in place before the start of the match.

Inform both teams of the area allocated to the coaches, medical staff and replacements during the match.

Ensure no spectators are in the playing enclosure during the match.

#### **Hosting Touring Sides, The following to be in Place**

Consent from the IRFU and Branch (whom the host club is affiliated to), regarding the match and conditions of the match.

Consent from the Club Executive for the match to take place as well as the facility requirements and protocol involved.

Written application for match official(s) (from Branch Referee Association) informing them of the match.

Clarification of laws (prior to the visit) to be applied in the match.

Schedule and other requirements of the visitors to be supplied by the visiting team prior to arrival.

Medical requirements to be in place for the match.

**Written consents must have been exchanged between the two Unions before leaving Ireland or in the case of hosting before the match is played.**

**When Visitors Being Billeted**

Establish with visiting group what will be required / involved regarding the visit, accommodation and other requirements.

Only members from the host club to be approached regarding accommodation requirements.

Meet with interested parties (hosts) to discuss requirements; suitability (Club Child Welfare Policy to apply), duration and conditions / protocol for billeting.

Publish a list with information and contact details of the host families.

Where possible ensure visiting players stays with their opposite numbers from the host club.

Limit the number of nights' accommodation that will be required.

Arrange most of the activities / function at the club to ensure involvement for all.

Inform all involved, regarding Club policy on age grade players and their safety.

Have a plan available in case of an emergency.

## ■ Photographic Equipment & Mobile Phones

### **Use of Photographic / Video Equipment**

With the increased use of technology (video or photographic) in rugby it is now important for clubs to adopt a policy in relation to the use of these images of their players. The use of these images on websites and publications has raised concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people.

### **Clubs Should Consider the Following When Using Images of Young Players**

Establish a policy regarding filming and or photographing of players.

Ensure parental / guardian agreement for the use of images / photographs.

Ensure consent / approval / accreditation is given prior to the event.

Establish what type of images/photographs will be allowed to ensure suitability.

Establish what information will accompany these photographs / images, ensure players are not identified by name.

Encourage the use of group photographs, identifying the club rather than the individual.

### **Mobile Phones**

Most children make use of a mobile phone. This has become an area where clubs need to establish a protocol to ensure their members will not be at risk.

### **Considerations**

Establish a club protocol regarding the use of mobile phones (calls / text) by players and adults as a mode of communication regarding club matters for events or matches.

Encourage the use of group texting among players and parents to inform them of activities and matches.

Avoid constant communication with individual players – liaise with parents / guardian on matters.

Have a policy regarding the use of phones (camera / video phones) in certain locations of the club (e.g. changing room / toilets).

Ensure phones are not being used as a form of Bullying (refer to section on Bullying).

Establish a protocol in the event of offensive content being distributed or found on a club member's mobile phone.

### **Age Grade Players Should be Advised as Follows**

If you receive an offensive photo, email or message, do not reply, save it, make a note of times and dates and tell a parent or the Child Welfare Officer within the club.

Be careful about who you give your number to and do not respond to unfamiliar numbers.

Change your phone number in cases of bullying or harassment.

Avoid using your phone in certain locations - inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. in the changing rooms.

Treat your phone as you would any other valuable item so that you guard against theft.

### Adult / Player Ratio

Staffing ratios are difficult to prescribe as they will vary according to activity, location and resources. It is important to ensure that there are enough people to be able to cope with the number of children participating in any activity and adequately respond to an emergency.

As a guide, a ratio of 1:10 should be considered as a minimum requirement where players are 11 years of age or older. For younger players or situations involving travel, the ratio should increase depending on the requirements or the activity the group will be involved in.

### Considerations

Age and gender of the group.

Where girls are involved ensure a mix of male and female adults.

Type of activity (training, traveling or social) to be undertaken.

Time involved.

Experience of the adults (coaches, managers and helpers/assistants) involved.

Previous experience with group or club and likely behaviour.

Legal requirements.

Location of activity or event and type of travel involved.

Suitability of the adults.

### Ensure

Players are never left unattended.

Adequate numbers of coaches / helpers are available to supervise all activities.

Coaches and managers know at all times where the players are & what they are doing.

Dangerous behaviour should not be tolerated at any stage.

Ensure the respect for the privacy of all young people in changing rooms, showers and toilets.

All participants are informed beforehand of what behavior will be accepted and not accepted from them.

Those who are operating in a supervisory role should have access to adequate first aid material as well as all important local phone numbers such as doctor, dentist, parental phone numbers for players, An Garda Síochána, PSNI and ambulance.

### The Club-House

Inform age grade players of the areas in the club house allocated to them.

Inform players of the times they will be allowed in the bar area of the club and what areas will be off limit to them.

Ensure all facilities are safe and up to the required standards.

Ensure there are sufficient facilities for the number of participants.

Club policy regarding alcohol and age grade players must be clear and visible to all members and visitors to the club.

All age grade activities at the club must be supervised by adult members of the club at all times.

Ensure there are sufficient medical facilities and equipment.

### The Changing Rooms

Should always be sufficient and clean.

Clubs to have a policy regarding changing rooms and the supervision of players in the change rooms.

There should be sufficient separate changing facilities if teams consist of boys and girls (Mini Rugby).

In the event of mixed teams a female adult to supervise the changing area for girls.

### **Playing and Training Areas**

#### **Ensure**

The playing and training area(s) are clean, safe and ready before use.

All equipment needed is clean, safe and of the standard required.

Vehicle access all times to the training or playing area.

Each team knows where their designated playing/training area is.

All activities to be safe and appropriate to the age group.

All activities are supervised at all times by members of the club.

#### **Safety Practices**

Safe management practices will not only enable a club to run smoothly and efficiently, but it will also help to minimize opportunities for accidents or harm to happen to children.

#### **Participants**

Have defined criteria for membership of the club.

Have a registration system for all players.

Keep a record on each player regarding medical details and needs as well as all contact numbers.

Ensure that all activities are properly supervised.

#### **Personal Insurance**

The IRFU insurance covers basic injury and all registered players are covered. It is strongly recommended for players, in addition, to have personal accident insurance cover.

### **Coaches and Helpers**

Have a clear policy on player/adult ratio for the club.

Have a clear policy for recruitment and procedures of all volunteers.

Have a clear title and area of responsibility for each volunteer.

Ensure coaches and helpers attend coaching courses.

### **Facilities**

#### **Ensure**

All buildings used are safe and of the required standard.

That there is at all times sufficient heating and ventilation.

Toilets, shower areas and washing facilities are up to standard.

That fire precautions are in place and that all members are aware of it.

That first aid facilities and equipment are adequate.

Access at all times to a phone.

Equipment is checked regularly and up to standard.

Insurance cover is adequate.

### **Players and Activities**

#### **Ensure**

Players are never left un-supervised.

Adequate numbers of coaches/ helpers are available to supervise all activities.

Coaches and managers know at all times where the players are and what they are doing.

Dangerous behaviour is not allowed at any stage.

## **Before a Training Session Starts**

### **Ensure**

Playing area and equipment is safe and free from any dangers.

Vehicle access to the playing area.

A qualified first-aid person is available.

First aid equipment and or medical room is available.

Access to a telephone, or mobile phone.

An 'Incident Book' is available to those in a supervisory capacity for the purposes of recording incidents which may occur which do not necessarily qualify as accidents or injuries requiring medical attention. All serious incidents or injuries should be clearly recorded, describing what happened, the circumstances, who was involved, and how the situation was resolved.

### **If an Accident / Incident Occurs**

Assess the situation and alert appropriate medical support if required.

### **For Minor Injuries**

Ensure only appropriately-qualified First Aid personnel assist the injured person.

Never give medication or drugs of any kind without professional / suitably qualified support.

Always inform parents / guardians of the incident and actions taken as soon as possible.

### **For Serious Injuries**

When injured player cannot be moved, take other participants away and ensure they are supervised.

If in doubt, send immediately for an ambulance. Do not move or touch the injured player unnecessarily. Keep the injured player warm and ensure the player has a clear air-way. Stay with the player until the qualified medical person(s) arrive. Ensure access to the playing area for emergency vehicles.

Inform the parents / guardian of the injured player.

Implement the accident reporting procedures/policies of the club.

### **First Aid Equipment**

Bags and / or boxes should be made from suitable materials designed to protect the contents therein and should be clearly marked.

Contents should only contain items which first-aid persons have been trained to use.

There should be sufficient quantities of the items available at all times and check the bag regularly to ensure the contents are not out of date.

The use of all equipment, medications, bandages etc. should always be directed or supervised by a suitably qualified person.

Advanced First-Aid equipment, e.g. Defibrillator machine, must be maintained in good working order and only ever utilised by trained personnel.

## Travelling with Age Grade Players

Traveling to and from venues is part of fulfilling fixtures. In order to ensure the safety of all involved clubs must ensure that suitable policies and procedures are in place.

To put players and parents at ease, organisers should ensure all arrangements are in place and communicated to all involved before the event. Parents should be informed of the mode of transport as well as drivers / Bus Company involved.

### Considerations

Ensure all arrangements are suitable for the journey to be undertaken.

Vehicles must be road worthy and appropriate and the driver to understand that he/she is responsible for the vehicle during the trip.

Ensure parental consent is obtained prior to journeys being undertaken.

All journeys to take place under the supervision of the team management.

### Bus / Coach Hire

When renting, make sure you deal with a reputable company.

Make sure the vehicle is suitable and equipped with appropriate safety features e.g. seatbelts.

### Passenger Cars

Although this is the most frequently used option it is important to ensure that the safety of all players are not jeopardised at any stage.

Prior to the trip, parents should be informed if this form of transport will be used and consent obtained for their child to travel this way.

Vehicles must be road worthy, safe and have appropriate insurance cover.

Drivers must have a suitable drivers licence.

All passengers must use seat belts for the duration of the journey.

All drivers are responsible for the safety of the passengers and must be aware of their legal responsibilities. Club members or parents should be asked to be involved if this mode of transport is used.

One passenger per seat at all times.

Inform parents of the time of departures as well as estimated time of arrival.

Publish a list of drivers / vehicles involved and their contact details to players and their parents/guardians.

### Air Travel

Group travel together at all times & not to be split up.

Players to be informed of legal requirements and behaviour appropriate for air travel.

Assist and guide all players through security and passport control when required.

Adult player ratio to be sufficient to assist and deal with emergency situations.

Adults to ensure all players are on board and in their seats before occupying their own seats.

Ensure players know position of the nearest adult in group and as well as emergency exits.

In the event of delays or cancellation the management and adults will be responsible for the well being of players.

### Sea travel

Ensure all players know what freedom/liberties they will have while at sea.

No player to be allowed on deck without supervision.

All players to be under supervision at all times.

Discuss emergency arrangements with players prior to departure.

Discipline to be maintained at all times.

Assist and guide all players through security and passport control, if required.

Ensure players have enough to keep them busy and avoid boredom.

**When Going on Tour  
(IRB regulation 15 to apply)**

Meet with players and their parents to discuss plans and conditions for the tour.

Clarify the conditions (duration, mode of travel and accommodation, adult / player ratio for supervision, medical and insurance) of the tour before application being submitted.

Establish a plan in the event of an emergency.

Written consent by the parents/ guardians for players to go on the tour.

Written application to the Club Executive, Branch and IRFU for permission for the tour at least one month before the planned trip.

**The Following Information  
Should be Supplied**

Matches scheduled for the tour.

Number of players and management to travel as part of the tour.

Proposed financial arrangements.

Code of Conduct for the tour party.

Details of insurance, medical & travel agent involved.

Written approval of the Union (to be visited) has been sought or been given.

**Written consents must have been exchanged between the two Unions before leaving Ireland or in the case of hosting, before the match is played. A brief report on the tour should be presented to the Club Committee and to parents of the players on tour within one month of the last match.**

**Overnight Stays Accommodation  
Hotels / Hostels**

Ensure accommodation and arrangements are appropriate to the age group involved.

Inform parents / guardians of room list and supervision arrangements prior to departure.

Inform all members of the squad and management of the policy and/or restrictions regarding billing items to rooms.

Be aware of individual dietary requirements, food allergies etc of traveling party.

Establish clear policy regarding movement of individuals outside of the hotel, trips into town/city etc.

Emphasise the 'ambassador' role of the squad in maintaining a positive image of the club and the IRFU, with regard to other guests, hotel staff and property.

**Billeting**

If being billeted ensure consent of parents/ guardians prior to departure.

Ensure the host families are members of the club being visited.

Host club to ensure all host families have been vetted and are suitable.

Contact details of host families to be supplied to visitors prior to departure.

## Volunteers & Recruitment

To ensure volunteers enjoy their contribution to rugby it is important to ensure that volunteers are appointed to roles which suit their strengths and personality. All involved should be clear of what will be expected of them regarding time, effort and commitment. Clubs are responsible for the recruiting of and the allocation of roles to volunteers and positions and areas of responsibility should be identified, clear and available.

### Recruitment

Most volunteers are driven by their desire to put something back into rugby therefore it is important when recruiting to ensure that all understand the club's policy regarding volunteers and their involvement in the game.

### Considerations

Clubs to have a written policy and procedure for the recruitment of volunteers.

Recruitment policy and procedures to be available to all interested parties e.g. candidates, parents and visitors.

Establish a clear title and job description for each of the positions.

If possible, recruit male and female volunteers in equal numbers.

Select people with appropriate skills and experience.

Establish a process which will enable you to ensure candidates' suitability.

Training should be provided for all newly-recruited personnel e.g. courses for coaches, referees and training to work with young people.

Ensure vacancies are open to all interested parties.

Meet with applicants. This may be done through an individual discussion with a member of the Management. All candidates to agree to IRFU policies and requirements regarding Child Welfare.

**The decision to appoint staff or volunteers is the responsibility of the club and not one individual within it. Good practice in management and supervision of volunteers after appointment is as important as establishing recruitment policies and procedures. The club management committee is responsible for all activities in the club including age grade activities and therefore must ensure policies and procedures are set and adhered to.**

### Roles & Responsibilities Identified Chairman

Chairs meetings and ensures that the committee fulfils its function within the Club, Branch and operates within IRFU policies.

Attends meetings in a neutral and impartial capacity.

Ensures meetings run to the agenda and that all matters are dealt with, fairly, thoroughly and according to procedures.

Should not make decisions on his own without consultation with the Committee or Club Executive.

Works in close liaison with the Youth and Mini Committees; Executive Committee and Club Secretary.

Ensures that the agenda for meetings is in line with the Club, Area, Branch and IRFU policies.

### Secretary

Acts mainly as the administration officer and serve as a link between members and committees.

Serves as first point of contact with outside agencies.

Informs members of meetings and agenda for these meetings.

Is responsible for the accurate record keeping of the minutes from meetings.

Works in close relationship with the Chairman; members and committees.

Ensures procedures are followed.

### **Registrar**

Acts as administration officer on all registration matters.

Ensures all registration forms are completed, verified and submitted correctly.

Responsible for the distribution of registration cards to members.

Serves as reference point on all matters regarding registration.

Reports to the Committee on all registration matters.

Works with the Branch Registrar.

### **Fixture Secretaries (Youth & Mini Rugby should have separate Fixture Secretaries)**

Ensures that the fixtures are completed on time and in a fair manner.

Identifies trends and areas of concern regarding completion of fixtures.

Acts as point of reference on matters regarding the fixtures / competitions of the teams.

Reports to the club and teams regarding fixtures and competitions.

Liaises with teams, coaches and managers involved, regarding details e.g. date, venue and kick-off of fixture(s).

Liaises with Branch Youth Committee regarding fixtures and competitions.

Ensures that protocols regarding fixtures and competitions are adhered to.

Liaises with Club Management Committee regarding fixtures and other requirements to host matches.

Liaises with Referees Association for match officials.

Informs match officials and Branch Referees' Association of cancellations and or postponements.

Informs Branch Fixture Secretary of results, cancellations or postponements. Collects all the results for matches and informs Youth, Mini and Club Management Committees of developments.

### **Youth Co-ordinator**

Acts as link between the Club Executive and Age Grade section.

Attends meetings on behalf of the Club Age Grade Rugby.

Ensures that all information relevant to all age grade rugby is circulated to volunteers, clubs and Branch.

Ensures all information circulated is correct and reaches the relevant people.

Ensures awareness of all Union, Branch and Club policies and that these are adhered to.

Ensures that all volunteers and age grade players are aware of all procedures and adhere to the procedures.

Reports to Area Youth Committee on all matters regarding the age grade rugby in his club.

Should not make decisions without consultation with the Youth Committee or Club Executive

### **Mini Rugby Representative**

Reports on all matters relating to Mini Rugby in the club.

Ensures that all official policies and developments relating to mini rugby are adhered to.

Ensures that mini rugby matters are dealt with sufficiently and according to procedures.

Acts as link between the Youth Committee & Mini Rugby. Ensures that all information reported on regarding mini rugby matters is correct.

Should not make decisions without consulting the Mini Rugby Committee, Youth Committee or Club Executive.

Represents Club at Area meetings.

#### **Branch Youth Committee Member**

Represents Area Youth Committee at Branch meetings.

Acts as a link between Area Committee and Branch on all youth matters.

Ensures all information reported on is correct and relevant.

Should not make decisions without consultation with the Area Youth Committee, Branch Committee.

Ensures that all official policies are adhered.

Ensures that the correct communication procedures are followed.

#### **Area Representative(s)**

Acts as link between the Branch committee & the Area.

Ensures that all information circulated between clubs (in the area) and Branch is correct.

Ensures the awareness of all Union and Branch policies and that these policies are adhered to.

Ensures that information is circulated to all clubs in the area.

Ensures that all clubs in the area are aware of all procedures and adhere to these procedures.

Reports to Branch youth committee on all matters regarding the area.

Should not make decisions without consultation with the Area or Branch Committee, Branch Rugby Department or Branch Secretary.

#### **Coaches**

Responsible for selecting and preparing teams for matches. Plans and prepares for training sessions and activities.

Ensures all players get equal opportunity to take part in club/team activities.

Sets the right example for players on and off the field.

Educates players in the ethos of rugby and the values of being a true sportsman. Acts fairly in the treatment of all players.

Works closely with the club Youth or Mini coordinators.

Conforms to all club and IRFU Child Welfare Policies.

Attains relevant coaching qualifications.

Ensures all activities are safe & supervised at all times.

#### **Manager, Team Helper or Assistants**

Assists the team with administration & organisational duties.

Liaises with the team and coaches regarding requirements for matches.

Assists with the supervision of players. Works closely with club Youth and Mini Coordinators ensuring all club policies are adhered to.

Communicates all information regarding the club and or fixtures to the team and coaches.

Ensures all club and IRFU policies regarding Child Welfare are adhered to.

## ■ Reporting Abuse

### Reporting Abuse

Should an age-grade player be at risk of harm, it is the duty of those in a position of responsibility to take the necessary steps to remove the risk and to ensure that all procedures are undergone in accordance with statutory guidelines.

### Leaders should be aware of the signs & types of abuse with the following points being central to the success of this effort

Knowledge of the behavioural and physical indicators.

Knowledge of the appropriate action and response to be taken.

Vigilance and avoidance of all situations conducive to risk;

Open, trusting & cooperative relationships within the Club and with parents / guardians and others concerned with children's welfare.

### Categories of Abuse

#### Physical Abuse

Is any form of non-accidental injury that causes significant harm to a child, it also occurs when an adult gives children alcohol or inappropriate drugs or fails to supervise their access to these substances.

#### Child Neglect

Neglect is normally defined in terms of omission, where a child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to affection from adults or medical care. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For instance, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries is not having his or her needs for supervision and safety met. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well

being and or development are severely affected.

#### Emotional Abuse

Is normally to be found in the relationship between an adult and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. It is rarely manifested in terms of physical symptoms.

#### Sexual Abuse

Occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others.

It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexual inappropriate ways.

### Reporting Procedures for Child Abuse

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 Health Boards and the Statutory Authorities.**

Clubs or Branches should not carry out their own 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 Local Health Authority.

It may be appropriate for a person to discuss concerns they have with another person in the club e.g. Club Children's Officer, or should the concern relate to this person, then the Branch Children's Officer - it is advisable that all inquiries are made directly to the local Health Board.

<sup>1</sup> See also Section 5 in the Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport.

The type of discussions referred to 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

Within a school, concerns relating to child abuse must be reported immediately to the Headmaster / Principal.

In cases where an allegation has been made, then the matter should be reported immediately to the relevant Statutory Authorities and the National Child Protection Officer

Should there be an allegation against a club member – the Club Children’s Officer must be informed 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.

All concerns and allegations made should be carefully recorded and ensure confidentiality is maintained at all stages.

In the case of a suspension, the official being suspended should be formally notified by senior personnel within the Club or Branch.

A Leader 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 Leader 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 Leader 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.

#### **Response to a Child Reporting**

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, accepting what is said.

Reassure the child 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.

Indicate what should happen next, such as informing parents, club children’s officer reporting to statutory authority etc.

Any and all consultations with others should be entirely confidential and should not involve investigative procedures.

Write a detailed account of any discussion regarding alleged or suspected abuse, as soon as possible after the discussion has taken place.

**Send the details to the local Health Board and the IRFU Child Protection Officer.**

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

**Key Points**

Should you witness or receive information that leads you to believe that a serious breach of this Document has occurred, you are required to bring the matter to the attention of the relevant management body, be it Club, Branch or Union. No further action is to be taken on your part, and no information is to be provided to others, save as provided below.

If you have evidence of an illegal activity that directly relates to the Game, you are obliged to inform the Gardai or PSNI as appropriate and you should notify the Branch and the I.R.F.U. of that fact.

You are not to discuss the matter with persons not already involved except with the express permission of the investigating authorities.

You are required to give every assistance possible to the Gardai, or PSNI or to the appropriate Committee of the IRFU in the investigation of the matter, and to assist with any necessary steps being taken by them in relation to the matter.