

Cranbrook Rugby Football Club



3.1 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

1. Cranbrook Rugby Football Club acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults involved in Cranbrook from harm.
2. Cranbrook RFC confirms that it adheres to the Rugby Football Union's Safeguarding Policy and the procedures, practices and guidelines and endorses and adopts the Policy Statement contained in that document.
3. A child is anyone under the age of 18 engaged in any rugby union activity. However, where a 17 year old male player is playing in the adult game it is essential that every reasonable precaution is taken to ensure that his safety and wellbeing are protected.
4. The Key Principles of the RFU Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy are that:
 - The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult (as appropriate) is, and must always be, paramount to any other considerations.
 - All participants regardless of age, gender, ability or disability, race, faith, culture, size, shape, language or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse or harm.
 - All allegations or suspicions of abuse, neglect, harm and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately.
 - Working in partnership with other organisations, statutory agencies, parents, carers, children and young people is essential for the welfare of children and young people.
 - Children have the right to expect support and personal and social development delivered by an appropriately recruited, vetted and managed individual. That support and development should relate to their participation in rugby union whether as players, volunteers or officials in the community or professional areas of the sport.
5. Cranbrook RFC recognises that all children have the right to participate in sport in a safe, positive and enjoyable environment whilst at the same time being protected from abuse, neglect, harm and poor practice. Cranbrook RFC recognises that this is the responsibility of everyone involved, in whatever capacity, at the club.

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6. Cranbrook RFC will implement and comply with the RFU Code of Conduct and the Codes of Conduct for Coaches, Spectators and Officials as appropriate. Cranbrook RFC will ensure its spectators, parents, members and officials are all aware of and have accepted the club Photographic Policy as set out in the club welcome pack and on the website.
7. Cranbrook RFC will endeavour to comply with the Guidance for Websites as set out on the RFU website and appended to this document.
8. The Club Safeguarding Officers are

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If you witness or are aware of an incident where the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult has been put at risk you must in the first instance inform the Club Safeguarding Officer. They will then inform the CB Safeguarding Manager and the RFU Safeguarding Executive. If an incident involves the Club Safeguarding Officer you should inform the Club Secretary, Tim Fagg tel: 01580 753150 email: rugby@timfagg51.plus.com and either the CB Safeguarding Manager or the RFU Safeguarding Executive.

9. All members of Cranbrook RFC who have a regular supervisory contact with children or a management responsibility for those working with children must undertake an RFU Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure and must also be ISA-registered in accordance with the RFU ISA-registration Policy.

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10. Cranbrook RFC will ensure that all its members, whether they are coaches, parents, players or officials will comply with the Best Practice Guidance as issued by the RFU. In summary, the following are **NOT** acceptable and will be treated seriously by the club and may result in disciplinary action being taken by the club, the CB or the RFU:
 - Working alone with a child, children, vulnerable adult, or adults.
 - Consuming alcohol whilst responsible for children or vulnerable adults.
 - Providing alcohol to children or allowing its supply.
 - Smoking in the presence of children.
 - Humiliating children or vulnerable adults.
 - Inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a child or vulnerable adult.
 - Participating in, or allowing, contact or physical games with children or vulnerable adults.
 - Having an intimate or sexual relationship with any child or vulnerable adult developed as a result of being in a 'position of trust.'
 - Making sexually explicit comments or sharing sexually explicit material.
11. Cranbrook RFC manages the changing facilities and arranges for them to be supervised by two adults (ISA-registered and RFU CRB checked) of the appropriate gender for the players using the facilities. Cranbrook RFC ensures that all its coaches, parents, officials and spectators are aware that adults must not change at the same time, using the same facilities as children or vulnerable adults.
12. Cranbrook RFC will ensure that its coaches [and *team managers*] will receive the support and training considered appropriate to their position and role. The RFU "Managing Challenging Behaviour" Policy has been adopted and circulated amongst the club workforce both, voluntary and paid.
13. Any events held on Cranbrook RFC premises must comply with this Policy and if appropriate a Safeguarding Plan should be discussed and circulated to those affected. Any tours, overseas or domestic, undertaken by Cranbrook RFC must comply with the relevant RFU Regulations and Guidance relating to tours.

Signed

Club Safeguarding Officer

Date

1st September 2009

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Guidance to clubs on club websites, and mobile and on-line communication with children

This guidance is important. It is based on current legislation and guidance. It reflects legal duties which clubs owe. Implementing this guidance should help clubs discharge their legal obligations.

Club Websites

Websites are a key part of the daily operation of most clubs. They are probably the most flexible way to communicate with members, and to anyone interested in joining a club. They also have the potential to be a very safe way to communicate with children, given their wide accessibility.

However, in the same way that a club has responsibility for the physical safety of a junior member when visiting the club's premises, that club must also ensure that there is nothing on its website which could harm a child, directly or indirectly. A club is responsible for the content of its website.

There are 2 key risks to guard against, and which are constant themes in the more detailed provisions in this guidance:

1. Disclosing personal information about a child to people accessing the website. This could be the child's name, address, or any information about a child's life, interests or activities which would help a stranger target a child, or engage that child in conversation.
2. Abusive or inappropriate content (photos, video or text), on the site itself or on linked sites.

Website content generally

There are three main child protection risks associated with content:

1. Inappropriate content (for example violent, sexual or hateful content). Although it is possible to impose restrictions on access, it is overwhelmingly likely that children will be able to access all areas of a club's website. Indeed, most clubs will positively want the website to generate interest among children. The risk applies both to text on the club's website, and on any linked websites.
2. Bullying. This could be material on the site which criticises or humiliates a child. It could also be information which places undue pressure on the child to participate in some aspect of a club's activities.
3. Disclosure of personal information of children. This could lead to grooming.

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Blogs

Weblogs (also known as Blogs) are a type of content which is becoming commonplace on websites. The creation of a blog is straightforward. It does not require technical or design expertise, and it can be updated remotely. Blogs present two particular challenges:

1. A central part of the attraction of a blog is that it is updated frequently. However the same risks apply to its content as apply to all other content on the site. A club cannot distance itself from the content of a blog it chooses to include on its site.
2. Blogs often contain a lot of opinion, as opposed to purely factual information.

Linked sites

Many sites contain links to other sites. This could be for commercial reasons, such as the sites of sponsors or advertisers, or simply to communicate information to be found on other websites. Before creating a link, a club should check thoroughly the content of the other website, both for child protection reasons, and to ensure the content poses no other risk to the club's reputation. Once a link is included on the site, the club should check its content periodically (the frequency of the checks depending on how frequently the content changes), and remove any link immediately if concerns arise.

An additional concern with linked commercial sites is inappropriate advertising or marketing aimed at children. The advertising industry is self-regulating through the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), and has produced detailed guidelines covering marketing to children.

Recommendations:

- Content must be checked that is it appropriate to be seen by children, and that it does not have the potential to bully, before it is included on the website. Sometimes these decisions can be finely balanced. If there is any doubt, the text should not be included.
- The responsibility for checking content needs to be allocated clearly to individual(s) who understand properly the issues involved. This may well be the individual at the club with responsibility for child protection, but this is not essential. The individual should be familiar with this guidance.
- In the unusual circumstance that it is possible any content will go onto the website without being checked by someone else (such as a blog) the club must satisfy itself that the author is sufficiently aware of child protection risks, and the content of this guidance, to be able to self-check effectively.
- Where members of the public can email comments which would then appear on the website (often called a message board, or chatroom, or discussion forum) the content of these emails should be checked before appearing on the website. Publication should not be automatic.

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- If a club receives any complaints about content, it should remove the content in question immediately, and reinstate it only once the complaint has been resolved. A club needs to be able to react quickly in the event of any complaint.
- Personal information about children over and above the child's name should not feature on the website.
- Links to another website should not be placed on a club's website unless that club has checked the site's content and is satisfied that the content is appropriate. It is good practice to discuss any proposed link with the owner of the other website, and obtain the owner's assurance that the linked site is designed to be suitable for children at all times of the day or night (some websites' content is different and more adult during the night). If the linked site has marketing content aimed at children, the club should obtain a further assurance from the other website owner that it complies with ASA guidelines.
- The content of linked sites should be checked thoroughly at least once every 6 months.
- If a club learns of any concerns over the content of the linked site, it should investigate immediately. Unless it is clear that there is no need for concern, the link should be removed immediately, and any decision to restore only made after the concern has been investigated.

Photos and video

Photos and video clips can make any child featured vulnerable to grooming if information about the child (name, address, activities or interests) is also disclosed. Furthermore, posting an image on the website carries a risk that the image could be taken and adapted for an inappropriate use.

Recommendations:

- Use group images, rather than individual images.
- For images of individual children (such as in action shots) where possible use models or illustrations.
- Only use images of children in suitable dress, to minimise the risk of inappropriate adaptation of the image
- If a child is named on the site, do not include an image (individual or group). If a child features in an image on the site, do not use the child's first name or last name, either in text on the site or in the image file name.
- Parents (in this guidance, the term "parents" covers whoever cares for the child), and the child if old enough to understand, should be notified of the intended use of an image on the website. The image should not be used if the parents or the child object (a requirement of the Data Protection Act as well as good child protection practice), and ideally clubs should obtain positive written consent. Where a club regularly uses certain types of image, such as team photos or match photos, notification and a consent request should be included in the information given to junior members and their parents upon joining the club.
- If consent was given initially, but is subsequently withdrawn by parent or child, the image should be removed from the site.

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Webcams and live image streams

The use of webcams on websites is becoming increasingly common, with pictures and sound streamed live. It can be a very effective way to portray a club's activities and atmosphere.

However control is difficult. Any live image stream, by its nature, cannot be checked before transmission. Also, depending on the siting of the camera, it may not be possible to limit the people whose image or speech is transmitted. Furthermore there is a risk that images or speech could help identify children, or contain personal information about those children, and the image stream could attract unwelcome interest from potential abusers. There is less risk when streaming a match or training session, compared to a social event. Schools are advised not to have live image streams on publicly available websites.

Risks are lessened if the streamed images are on a part of the website where access is restricted, such as a members section. However such restricted access prevents the images generating interest in the club among members of the public.

Recommendations:

- A club needs to give careful thought to why it wants its website to stream images, what images it intends to capture, and how they will be presented.
- Any transmitted image stream should be pictures only, without sound.
- As far as possible, the images should be of groups of people, not individuals.
- A club should try to notify all visitors (both adults and children) whose image may be caught that a webcam is in operation. Usually this is through the use of prominent notices placed around all entrances to the area covered by the camera.

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Mobile and on-line communication with children

Technology is moving very fast in this area. There are now many different ways for people to communicate. In addition to land-lines, there are mobile phones for voice and text, and most new phones incorporate cameras that take still shots and video. Two-way video calling is set to grow fast. On-line communication can be by email, instant messaging, chatrooms, and social networking sites.

The risks posed by such methods of communication arise from:

- The privacy. It is usually one-to-one (often chatrooms have the facility for individuals to communicate 1:1 within the chatroom).
- The wide range of content that can be transmitted, including content of a violent, sexual or hateful nature.
- The ease with which images can be forwarded onto others.
- The difficulty in knowing truly who you are communicating with. Where grooming happens, it often involves this type of communication.

In sport, there are additional risks:

- Inappropriate pressure can be exerted by adults, particularly coaches, on children (such as to play when injured).
- There can be inappropriate criticism of a child's performance.
- An official position or role within a club, such as Coach, can carry with it a level of authority, and engender a level of trust, that facilitates the control of a child.

Against this background, a club needs to establish rules covering how adults connected with that club communicate with children connected with that club.

Recommendations:

- Club Officials and Coaches should not communicate with individual children by text or on-line at any time, on any matter, unless there is an immediate risk to the welfare of that child which can be lessened by such contact.
- When communication by phone is needed, where possible Club Officials and Coaches should speak to the parent of a child.
- Club Officials and Coaches can speak to individual children on mobile phones provided they have prior consent from the child's parents, and from the child if old enough to understand.
- If a club needs to communicate club-related information to children by email (such as training or match details), it should use email groups comprising email addresses given by parents. Such emails should only come from specific designated individuals, and children and their parents should know who these designated individuals are. Lists of the individuals within these groups (names only) should be publicised within the club, and easily available. Individuals must consent before they are included in the lists, and must be removed from the list if they wish to leave.

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IMPLEMENTING GUIDANCE

The welfare of children at a club will only be protected properly if guidance is implemented effectively.

Recommendations:

- Based on this guidance, a club needs to devise written policies which cover its own particular circumstances, and meet its particular needs, and then to ensure the policies are followed fully.
- Policies need to be widely publicised. They should be on a club's website, and on display at the club (such as on noticeboard). They should also be emailed or posted to the parents of each child at the club.
- A club needs clear written procedures that set out how its policies are to be implemented. For example, policies should set out how junior match reports will be checked before being put on the website, and how email groups will be maintained. Procedures do not need to be publicised in the way that policies are. Their focus is internal. They should ensure that individual responsibilities are clearly defined and attributed, and people know precisely what action is expected of them to discharge those responsibilities.
- A club needs to make it easy for children, their parents or any interested individual to raise a child protection concern. Many clubs have a designated individual with child protection responsibility, and would want concerns to be raised with that person. If so, their name, photo and contact details should be on the club's website and on display at the club.

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GUIDANCE FOR DEALING WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Staff/volunteers who deliver sports activities to children may, on occasions, be required to deal with a child's challenging behaviour.

These guidelines aim to promote good practice and to encourage a proactive response to supporting children to manage their own behaviour. They suggest some strategies and sanctions which can be used and also identify unacceptable sanctions or interventions which must *never* be used by staff or volunteers.

The guidelines will also include the views and suggestions of children.

These guidelines are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration.
- All those involved in activities (including children, coaches/volunteers and parents/carers) should be provided with clear guidelines about required standards of conduct, and the organisation/club's process for responding to behaviour that is deemed unacceptable.
- Children must never be subject to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading.
- Some children exhibit challenging behaviour as a result of specific circumstances, eg a medical or psychological condition, and coaches may therefore require specific or additional guidance. These and any other specific needs the child may have should be discussed with parents/carers and the child in planning for the activity, to ensure that an appropriate approach is agreed and, where necessary, additional support provided e.g. from external agencies, Children's Social Care services etc
- Sport can make a significant contribution to improving the life experience and outcomes for all children and young people^[1]. Every child should be supported to participate and, only in exceptional circumstances where the safety of a child or of other children cannot be maintained, should a child be excluded from club activities.

Planning Activities

Good coaching practice requires planning sessions around the group as a whole but also involves taking into consideration the needs of each individual athlete within that group. As part of session planning, coaches should consider whether any members of the group have presented in the past or are likely to present any difficulties in relation to the tasks involved, the other participants or the environment.

Where staff/volunteers identify potential risks, strategies to manage those risks should be agreed in advance of the session, event or activity. The planning should also identify the appropriate number of adults required to safely manage and support the session including

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being able to adequately respond to any challenging behaviour and to safeguard other members of the group and the staff/ volunteers involved.

When children are identified as having additional needs or behaviours that are likely to require additional supervision, specialist expertise or support, this should be discussed with parents/carers and where appropriate young people. The club should seek to work in partnership with parents/carers, and where necessary external agencies, to ensure that a child or young person can be supported to participate safely.

Agreeing Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours

Staff, volunteers, children, young people and parents/carers should be involved in developing an agreed statement of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (code of conduct) and the range of sanctions which may be applied in response to unacceptable behaviour. This can be done at the start of the season, in advance of a trip away from home or as part of a welcome session at a residential camp.

Issues of behaviour and control should regularly be discussed with staff, volunteers, parents and children in the context of rights and responsibilities. When children are specifically asked, as a group, to draw up a code of conduct that will govern their participation in club activities, experience indicates that they tend to arrive at a very sensible and working set of 'rules' with greater 'buy-in' from participants than those simply imposed by adults within the club. If and when such a code is compiled, every member of the group can be asked to sign it, as can new members as they join.

Managing Challenging Behaviour

In responding to challenging behaviour the response should always be proportionate to the actions, be imposed as soon as is practicable and be fully explained to the child and their parents/carers. In dealing with children who display negative or challenging behaviours, staff and volunteers might consider the following options:

- Time out - from the activity, group or individual work.
- Reparation - the act or process of making amends.
- Restitution - the act of giving something back.
- Behavioural reinforcement - rewards for good behaviour, consequences for negative behaviour.
- De-escalation of the situation - talking through with the child.
- Increased supervision by staff/volunteers.
- Use of individual 'contracts' or agreements for their future or continued participation.
- Sanctions or consequences e.g. missing an outing.
- Seeking additional/specialist support through working in partnership with other agencies to ensure a child's needs are met appropriately e.g. referral for support to Children's Social Care, discussion with the child's key worker if they have one, speaking to the

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child's school about management strategies (all require parental consent unless the child is felt to be 'at risk' or 'in need of protection').

- Temporary or permanent exclusion

The following should never be permitted as a means of managing a child's behaviour:

- Physical punishment or the threat of such.
- Refusal to speak to or interact with the child.
- Being deprived of food, water, access to changing facilities or toilets or other essential facilities.
- Verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation.

Staff and volunteers should review the needs of any child for whom sanctions are frequently necessary. This review should involve the child, parents/carers and in some cases others involved in supporting or providing services for the child and his/her family, to ensure an informed decision is made about the child's future or continued participation. As a last resort, if a child continues to present a high level of risk or danger to him or herself, or others, he or she may have to be suspended or barred from the group or club activities.

A policy for managing challenging behaviour

In conclusion, all organisations that have a duty of care to children and young people should develop and implement a policy and procedures on managing challenging behaviour or consider incorporating this into their child protection policy. It should clearly set out the following:

- The standard of conduct expected from staff/volunteers and participants.
- How the organisation will respond to unacceptable behaviours.
- How your organisation will respond to 'high risk' behaviours'. This will give children and young people a clear message about when staff may need to get involved to stop a particular form of behaviour, and describe options to avoid confrontation through for example, time out.
- The circumstances in which children will be restrained. A decision to restrain a child should be firmly based on the safety of the child and must **NEVER** be made as a punishment or to get children to comply with instructions.
- The guidance, information or any support and/or training available to staff/volunteers, particularly where they are supporting a child with recognised challenging behaviour to access club activities.
- The circumstances where external agencies will be contacted for support or in response to concerns e.g. – Children's Social Care services, the Police.

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- What will happen after an incident? Your organisation must have in place arrangements to check on the physical and emotional wellbeing of the child and staff, guidance on recording, who should be informed and a system for recording and monitoring.

This briefing has been developed from “Creating a Safe Environment in Sport, Scottish Governing Bodies Child Protection Guidelines” (sportscotland/ Children 1st)

[1] Go to www.evrychildmatters.gov.uk for more information about the government’s strategy for achieving improved outcomes for all children