



IRISH RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

For Age-Grade Players

2015





MESSAGE

PHILIP BROWNE

IRFU CEO

IRFU seek to promote the welfare of all Age-Grade Players so that they develop to the best of their ability in a safe and fun rugby environment. We want to welcome young people to the game so that they thrive in our care. Young people are the lifeblood of our game and their welfare and protection is the primary concern for all adults involved in IRFU.

The IRFU expects those involved with age grade rugby to publicise, adapt and supervise the implementation of the this code. The IRFU has committed itself to monitoring and enforcing this code where reasonably possible.

This document is to assist clubs implement best practice in the area of safeguarding Age-Grade Players – one of our greatest assets of our game – and it is our responsibility to ensure that they remain active in rugby. They will do this when they feel our respect and where their dignity, health and welfare is prioritised.

This policy will be updated by the IRFU¹ every 2-years, next review August 2017

¹Abbreviated to "IRFU" throughout this Code.

INDEX

Glossary		4
Section 1	Policy	5
Section 2	People	10
Section 3	Best Practice - Safeguarding Young People's Welfare	19
Section 4	Protection	29
Appendices		
One	Declaration of Intent	36
Two	Sign-up Form Age-Grade Player	38
Three	Codes of Conduct	40
Four	Referees Code of Conduct	42
Five	Club Action Plan	44

GLOSSARY

Abuse includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and sexual abuse as described in the “IRFU Safeguarding Policy”

Age Grade Player means a player who is a member of an Age Grade Team.

Age Grade Team means a team of players which is regulated by reference to the dates of birth of the players.

Association of Referees means the Association of Referees Connacht Branch, the Ulster Society of Rugby Football Referees, the Munster Association of Referees or the Association of Referees of the Leinster Branch.

Branch means a branch of the IRFU.

Branch Welfare Officer is a person appointed by a Branch to implement the directions of the “National Safeguarding Officer” and to follow the policy for Age Grade Players of the IRFU.

Club means a club (including a school) affiliated to the IRFU. For the purpose of guidance and implementation of the IRFU Safeguarding Policy the Exiles will be considered in similar terms as a “CLUB” affiliated to the IRFU.

Club Welfare Officer is a person appointed by a Club to implement the directions of the National Safeguarding Officer and the Branch Welfare Officers and to follow the IRFU Safeguarding Policy for Age Grade Players. This position is the equivalent of Designated Liaison Person as per ‘Children First Guidance’.

Gym includes a “weight-room”.

IRFU means the Irish Rugby Football Union.

IRFU Guidelines means the IRFU Safeguarding Policy and related IRFU Guidelines for Working with Children².

National Protection Officer is the person appointed by the IRFU Executive Committee to advise the IRFU in relation to this Policy and Code.

National Safeguarding Officer is the person appointed by the IRFU Executive Committee to implement the policy and decisions in relation to safeguarding for Age Grade Players of the IRFU. This person will act as Designated Liaison Person for the IRFU as per Children First Guidance and Our Duty to Care.

Parent(s) includes guardians.

Referee can include Branch Referee or Club and School Affiliate Referees. A Branch Referee means a person who is an active member of an Association or Society of Referees recognised by the IRFU. Club and School Affiliate Referees are members of a club or school and are appointed by their club or schools when no Branch referee is available.

Sports Councils Code means the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children’s Sport as published by the Irish Sports Council and Sport Northern Ireland and available at www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/code and www.sportni/documents/2.code_of_ethics.

Sports Leaders means all adults involved in children’s sports³.

Statutory Authorities means in Ireland (ROI) ‘Tusla’ (Child and Family Agent, CFA) and An Garda Síochána (“Gardaí”) and in Northern Ireland (NI) the Health and Social Care Trust and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (“PSNI”).

² Available at www.irishrugby.ie/

³ This is the definition used in the Sports Councils’ Code.



SECTION ONE

IRFU Safeguarding Policy and Related Policies

The IRFU is committed to the enjoyment of rugby by young people. It values and encourages the participation of parents, guardians, teachers, Sports Leaders and volunteers in the participation of rugby activities Age-Grade Players⁴.

The fundamental policy of the IRFU is to respect the dignity and rights of each individual Age Grade Player. The IRFU will strive throughout its organisation and spheres of influence to promote, create and maintain safe environments for Age Grade Players. It will also ensure the key values of Respect, Inclusion, Integrity, Excellence and Fun.

The IRFU expects those involved with age grade rugby to publicise, adapt and supervise the implementation of this code. The IRFU has committed itself to monitoring and enforcing this code where reasonably possible.

⁴ "Young people" are called "Age Grade Players" by the World Rugby Board (formerly IRB) and "Age Grade Players" is the term used by the IRFU in this Code.

IRFU SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The requirements in this Safeguarding Policy are expected to be complied with by all Branches and clubs that the IRFU support. Guidelines will be published and updated to assist in the application and interpretation of these requirements. The Sports Councils' Code of Ethics should be used where the IRFU has not published specific guidelines⁵.

All those working '**regularly and continuously**' with age-grade players should agree to abide by this Policy through signing the 'recruitment' form in Appendix 1. For those who also work at Branch /Union level they should agree to abide by any additional requirements of the employer. Vetting requirements will also be adhered to in both ROI and NI.

If the 'Leader' is moving from a club to a Branch/ Union role within 1 year of a club recruitment process the applicant will be asked to provide evidence of adherence to the Policy. If the terms of the role differs the Branch/Union will repeat the recruitment process.

All requests from the National Safeguarding Officer to adhere to, comply with or furnish evidence relating to this Code must be fulfilled promptly. (Reference Appendix 5, Club Action Plan).

⁵ Available at www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/code and www.sportni/documents/2.code_of_ethics.

PRINCIPLES

- The safety, health, general welfare and dignity of each Age Grade Player must be respected.
- Sports Leaders in rugby should endeavour to consider the safety, health, welfare and dignity of Age Grade Players to be paramount and superior to all other considerations.
- The enjoyment of rugby by each Age Grade Player should be pursued as an objective.
- It is the role and responsibility of every officer and member of a branch, and club, together with the IRFU, to ensure that the spirit of this policy are promoted, implemented and monitored successfully.
- The IRFU, branches and clubs should review their Safeguarding Policy every 2-years and/or as legislative changes occur in ROI and NI.

COMPLIANCE

- The IRFU has a National Safeguarding Officer and a National Protection Officer who shall be appointed with full power and authority to implement, resource and supervise compliance with this Policy and the Sports Councils' Code.
- Compliance with this Policy and the Sports Councils' Code will be monitored by the IRFU through the Branches and with the clubs annually, using the 'Club Action Plan', Appendix 5.
- The IRFU is committed to providing personnel and assistance for courses and training dealing with compliance issues arising from this Policy.
- The IRFU will monitor compliance and alleged breaches of this Policy and will discuss same when necessary for the benefit, protection and information of Age Grade Players and their parents where it is permissible and reasonable.
- The existing disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures of the IRFU will be regularly reviewed to accommodate the implementation and enforcement of this Code.

PROMOTING THE SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Each club shall promote the interests of Age Grade Players by:

- (a) Appointing a **Club Welfare Officer** who shall have the primary aim of maintaining a child centred ethos.
- (b) Defining the roles of officers, committees, Sports Leaders, Employees, and parents for Age Grade Players.
- (c) Monitoring procedures for protecting the interests of Age Grade Players through Club Action Plan.
- (d) Prominently displaying the IRFU safeguarding message and information about their plans to follow this Policy and the Sports Councils' Code for easy access by Sports Leaders, Members, Employees, Age Grade Players and their parents.
- (e) Providing in a planned manner, training and information meetings for everyone associated with Age Grade Players about this Policy.
- (f) Ensuring that the Club Welfare Officer knows how to liaise with the National Safeguarding Officer and Statutory Authorities concerning allegations or suspicion about abuse of an Age Grade Player. This can be done in conjunction with the National Safeguarding Officer.
- (g) Promoting contact with representatives of the IRFU and/or Statutory Authorities to contribute to and learn about child protection issues, best practices and recommended procedures.
- (h) Ensuring that this Policy and the Sports Councils' Code is adopted and followed by its organisation and members.

AGE-GRADE SAFEGUARDS IN RELATION TO IRFU MEDICAL GUIDELINES

- Individuals involved with the management of Age-Grade players are advised to undertake a SAFE-Rugby Level 1 course. This is a 1-day rugby specific first aid and emergency care course for coaches, officials, family members and players. For course information and booking see, www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/safe_rugby.php.
- Appropriate equipment should be available whenever Age Grade players are playing or training for the game. For information on medical rooms, first aid, emergency rooms and automated external defibrillators see, www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/first_aid.php.
- Effective procedures for responding to and recording serious injuries, including concussion should be in place. See the IRFU Serious Injury Report Form online and relevant personnel should watch the concussion video for coaches, family members, referees and senior and junior players: www.irishrugby.ie/downloadsIRFU_Serious_Injury_Report_Form.pdf and www.irishrugby.ie/irfu/concussion_videos.php
- A parent should be notified as soon as possible following an injury or incident. A parent is advised to discuss injuries with appropriate personnel if their child is playing in dual clubs/school or another sport, e.g. if a child is injured in school the parent should inform club personnel and vice-versa.
- Under no circumstances should an Age Grade Player be allowed to train or play rugby contrary to medical advice.
- Recording of medication prescribed for an Age Grade Player should be done using the parental sign-up sheet, Appendix 2.

AGE-GRADE SAFEGUARDS IN RELATION TO SAFETY

- No coach should be appointed or retained for Age Grade Players unless the coach:
 - Has a qualification appropriate to the level of the players concerned;
 - Has completed the vetting process through IRFU;
 - Has subscribed to the IRFU's Code of Conduct for Coaches of Age Grade Rugby;
 - Is adequately resourced and supported;
 - Maintains and furnishes such records and evidence as specified by the IRFU.
- Referees for matches involving Age Grade Players must subscribe to the rules and procedures laid down by an Association or Society of Referees recognised by the IRFU.
- Clubs should follow safety/premises guidelines as set out by IRFU, see www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/links_and_documents.php
- For further information see, www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/safe_rugby.php and www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/medical.php

EDUCATING PARENTS AND AGE GRADE PLAYERS

Branches and clubs should:

- (a) Advise parents about the IRFU Safeguarding Policy and the guidelines published by the IRFU and the Sports Councils; advise of parents' duties in particular, see the Parents Code of Behaviour in Appendix 3.
- (b) Educate Age Grade Players about their rights and obligations as described in the Sports Councils' Code ⁶.
- (c) Seek and enforce where possible the observance of this Policy by Age Grade Players and their parents.
- (d) Advise parents and players to watch the IRFU Concussion videos at www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/concussion_videos.php.

⁶See paragraphs 4.4 of the Sports Councils' Code.

DATA PROTECTION

All safeguarding documents will be kept according to, or each case of any amending legislation, the requirements of the Irish Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2003, and the UK Data Protection Act 1998; this includes requirements for the collecting, storage and requests of personal data.

For general information on Data Protection consult the Data Protection Commissioner's Irish web site on www.dataprotectionact.ie or the UK Information Commissioner's web site ico.org.uk.



SECTION TWO

People

SAFEGUARDING PERSONNEL

The IRFU Safeguarding Policy identifies four roles that come under the heading of 'Children's Officers' as per the Sports Councils' Codes. These together with the definitions agreed upon are as follows:

- *National Protection Officer* is the person appointed by the IRFU Committee to advise the IRFU in relation to this Policy, with specific responsibility for reporting concerns to the Statutory Authorities.
- *National Safeguarding Officer* is the person appointed by the IRFU Committee to implement the policy and decisions for Age Grade Players of the IRFU. This person will act as Designated Liaison Person for the IRFU as per Children First Guidance and Our Duty to Care.

- *Branch Welfare Officer* is the person appointed by a Branch to implement the directions of the National Safeguarding Officer and to follow the policy for Age Grade Players of the IRFU.

- *Club Welfare Officer* is the person appointed by a Club to implement the directions of the National Safeguarding Officer and Branch Welfare Officer and to follow the Policy for Age Grade Players of the IRFU.

These officers operate within their respective spheres of influence at IRFU, Branch and Club level to implement the IRFU Safeguarding Policy and to procure the best possible compliance within its Policy, including implementing the Club Action Plan, Appendix 5.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives in defining the roles of the safeguarding personnel are to ensure that :

1. The IRFU has available a clear channel of communications outwards of IRFU requirements and advice in respect of the Safeguarding Policy and the implementation of its guidelines.
2. The persons associated with the IRFU, including Age-Grade Players, parents of Age-Grade Players, Sports Leaders, Club Officers and Clubs, operate within a structure which ensures that their needs are met with regard to following the Safeguarding Policy and implementing its guidelines.

3. The IRFU has available to it a structure within which incidents of concern regarding Age Grade Players and the persons working with them are brought speedily to the attention of the relevant officials, and appropriate action is taken.
4. The IRFU has available to it a structure which permits monitoring of compliance with the Safeguarding Policy and implementation of its guidelines.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A CLUB WELFARE OFFICER WILL :

1. Act at all times in the best interests of Age Grade Players;
2. Be intimately familiar with the provisions of the Safeguarding Policy and its guidelines and with such further information and requirements as may be provided or put in place by the IRFU;
3. Communicate with the appropriate Branch Welfare Officer on any matter on which the Club Welfare Officer considers it necessary to do so, or any matter in relation to Age Grade Players on which the advice or directions of the Union are required;
4. Receive from the Branch Welfare Officer advice, information and directions from the IRFU concerning Age Grade Players and act accordingly;
5. Inform their Clubs of requirements made by the IRFU concerning Age Grade Players;
5. Ensure that they are in a position to respond accurately and promptly to queries from the IRFU as to the welfare of Age Grade Players in their club generally or in relation to any specific incident which may occur⁷;
7. Be the contact person in the club for the Union's National Child Protection Officer and/or Statutory Authorities regarding the welfare of Age Grade Players who are members of the club⁸;
8. Communicate with Age-Grade Players;
9. Provide advice and information to parents of Age-Grade Players;
10. Complete the Club Action Plan for monitoring purposes and submit to IRFU through the Branch on an annual basis.

⁷This will require the keeping of records where required by the Union, for example as to coaching qualifications, recruitment of leaders and/or management practices.

⁸ Section 4, Safeguarding Policy, regarding reporting requirements.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A BRANCH WELFARE OFFICER WILL:

- Act at all times in the best interests of Age Grade Players;
- Be intimately familiar with the provisions of the Safeguarding Policy and its guidelines and with such further information and requirements as may be provided or put in place by the IRFU;
- Ensure that each club within the relevant Branch has in place a Club Welfare Officer and maintain a record of the contact details for each such Officer;
- Provide information and training to Club Welfare Officers as required by the IRFU;
- Communicate with the National Safeguarding Officer on any matter on which the Branch Welfare Officers considers necessary to do so or any matter in relation to Age Grade Players on which the advice or directions of the IRFU are required;
- Receive from the National Safeguarding Officer advice, information and directions from the IRFU concerning Age Grade Players and act accordingly;
- Ensure that they are in a position to respond accurately and promptly to queries from the IRFU regarding the welfare of Age Grade Players in their Branch;
- Transmit requests for information/queries from the IRFU to Club level and be responsible for submitting the responses to the IRFU;
- Respond in the first instance to queries from Club Welfare Officers regarding the welfare of Age Grade Players;
- Refer appropriate queries from Club Welfare Officers to the National Safeguarding Officer and communicate the response back to the Club or Clubs.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

THE NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING OFFICER WILL:

- Act at all times in the best interests of Age Grade Players;
- Be intimately familiar with the provisions of the Safeguarding Policy and its guidelines and with such further information and requirements as may be provided or put in place by the IRFU;
- Assist Branch Welfare Officers in organising the appointment and training of Club Welfare Officers;
- Receive reports from Branch Welfare Officers of incidents affecting the welfare of an Age Grade Player or Players;
- Respond to queries from Branch Welfare Officers regarding the welfare of Age Grade Players;
- Liaise with the National Protection Officer regarding the welfare of Age Grade Players and in particular regarding specific incidents which affect the welfare of an Age Grade Player or Players;
- Liaise with the Statutory Authorities as necessary on any incident regarding the welfare of an Age Grade Player or Players;
- Communicate directly with the IRFU Committee on all matters affecting the welfare of Age Grade Players;
- Advise the IRFU Committee on matters affecting the welfare of Age Grade Players;
- Liaise with the Sports Councils of Ireland (ISC & SNI) regarding the welfare of Age Grade Players.

THE NATIONAL PROTECTION OFFICER WILL:

- Act at all times in the best interests of Age Grade Players;
- Be intimately familiar with the provisions of the Safeguarding Code and its guidelines and with such further information and requirements as may be provided or put in place by the IRFU;
- Liaise with the National Safeguarding Officer regarding the welfare of Age Grade Players;
- Communicate directly with the IRFU Committee on all matters affecting the welfare of Age Grade Players;
- Receive reports from the National Safeguarding Officer regarding any specific incident which affects the welfare of an Age Grade Player or Players;
- Liaise with the Statutory Authorities as necessary on any incident regarding the welfare of an Age Grade Player or Players;
- Advise the IRFU Committee on matters affecting the welfare of Age Grade Players.

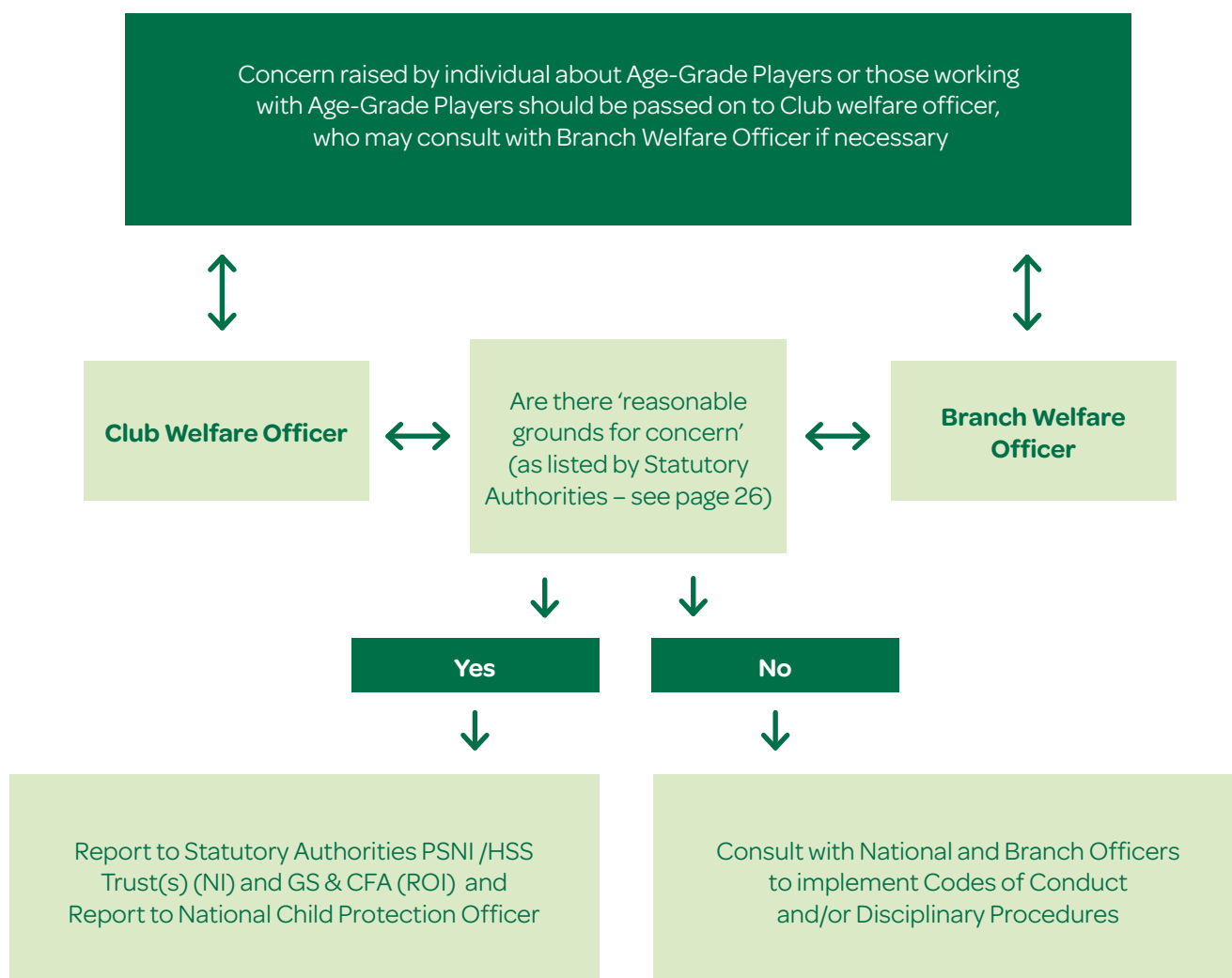
IRFU SAFEGUARDING PROGRAMME

POLICY AND GUIDANCE – ENSURING BEST PRACTICE IN AGE-GRADE RUGBY



IRFU SAFEGUARDING PROGRAMME

REPORTING A CONCERN



MANAGEMENT PRACTICES BY CLUB AND THE CLUB WELFARE OFFICER

All branches and clubs must retain records for its:

- (a) Age Grade Players;
- (b) Employees;
- (c) Sports Leaders

and keep records concerning them in accordance with the procedures and forms suggested by the Sports Councils' Code and related Statutory Authority's documents; and in accordance with data protection.

The terms of engagement for Sports Leaders, the Branch Welfare Officer, the Club Welfare Officer and committees involved with Age Grade Players should be reviewed every season.

Management for branches and clubs shall promote best practice for Age Grade Players by following the recommendations of the IRFU and the Sports Councils' Code⁹

⁹Paragraph 2.7 and Chapter 3 of the Sports Councils' Code particularly.

ADMINISTRATION AND REGULATIONS

The way we work with Age-Grade Players, how we behave around them and our attitudes towards them will contribute to the way young people feel about themselves.

Once a commitment to the IRFU Safeguarding Policy has been enshrined within a club's constitution, then all rules and regulations will stem from this.

An examination of existing structures, rules and regulations should help provide a framework for creating and maintaining a child-centred approach within the club. For further guidance in this area see www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/How_to_Achieve_Best_Practice.pdf.

CLUB GUIDELINES:

- Sports Leaders should sign an agreement with the club that includes signing up to the IRFU Safeguarding Policy, (see Appendix 1).
- Select people with the appropriate skills and experience.
- Training should be provided for all newly-recruited personnel e.g. courses for coaches and referees and/or training to work with Age-Grade Players, e.g. Safeguarding or Safe Rugby.
- Always have appropriate adult/child ratios (review this with insurance company)
- List all procedures for away trips for Age-Grade Players.
- Age-Grade Players should follow IRFU guidelines in relation to the wearing of protective gear, [www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/REGULATIONS_Mini_Rugby_2012_to_2015\(1\).pdf](http://www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/REGULATIONS_Mini_Rugby_2012_to_2015(1).pdf)
- Age-Grade Players under 18 years of age should not play on more than one team in any one season without prior parental written consent.
- Criteria for selection to squads should be listed.
- Each club should have the procedures for responding to reports or concerns relating to the welfare and safety of Age-Grade Players known throughout the Age-Grade section. All Sports Leaders, Age-Grade Players, parents should be aware of how to report and to whom concerns should be reported within the club.
- Clubs should ensure that all procedures regarding safety in sport for Age-Grade Players must be available and visible in the club.
- Copies of this Safeguarding Policy and its accompanying guidelines for Parents, Sports Leaders and Club Committees should be widely available within clubs; as should links to Statutory guidelines.
- Everyone involved in safeguarding and child welfare matters should be aware of their responsibility to work in co-operation with the Statutory Authorities, see Section 4 for more details, (page 32).



SECTION THREE

Best Practice - Safeguarding
the Welfare of Age-Grade Players

SPORTS LEADERS

All Sports Leaders who have responsibility for Age Grade Players must commit to and follow the requirements and best practice for Sports Leaders as set out in this Safeguarding Policy. All those working 'regularly & continuously' and/or within 'regulated activity' must also complete vetting checks, see below.

Sports Leaders with responsibility for Age-Grade Players must when requested by the IRFU, their branch, club, school or employer:

- (a) Participate in education and training relating to their activities with Age Grade Players;
- (b) Remain competent to provide safe and rewarding experiences for Age Grade Players;
- (c) Submit to and follow this Safeguarding Policy by successfully completing a vet, signing the Declaration of Intent, see Appendix One

GUIDELINES RELATING TO SPORT LEADERS

(Please note the following is a non-exhaustive list, regard should be given to 4.1 Irish Sports Council “Code of Ethics and Good Practices for Children’s Sport”).

- Try to work with other adults present and avoid situations where you are alone with individual Age-Grade Players.
- Identify aspects of necessary physical contact e.g. scrum and tackle. Let parents know of these conditions so that behaviours cannot be misinterpreted.
- Ensure that travel arrangements are set out in advance and known by all.
- Where mixed teams compete away from home, endeavour that the group is accompanied by at least one male and one female adult, preferably a parent.
- Always ensure the well-being and safety of Age-Grade Players at all times.

AVOID:

- Spending too much time with any one Age-Grade Player away from others
- Taking Age-Grade Players on journeys alone. Where possible, Sports Leaders should not travel regularly with individual Age-Grade Players and where this occurs the use of the Irish Sports Council SafeSport app is advised, www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/Participation/Code_of_Ethics/Code-Of-Ethics-App/
- Taking an Age-Grade Player to your home or agree to meet an Age-Grade Player individually on your own away from the club setting.

- Taking sessions alone. This may occasionally occur due to lateness, sickness, etc. but this should not be a regular practice within club and/or squad.
- Constant communication with one Age-Grade Player by phone, text, email, etc. Avoid becoming ‘friends’ with Age-Grade Players on social media such communication should be for the purposes of administration of club business and should not be for social / friendship purposes.

NEVER:

- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay.
- Share a room with an Age-Grade Player alone.
- Permit or engage in any form of inappropriate touching, keeping safety of the age-grade player as primary concern.
- Permit Age-Grade Player to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to any Age-Grade Player.
- Allow allegations made by any Age-Grade Player to go unrecorded and not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature that an Age-Grade Player can do for themselves.
- Undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis, massage, etc.) while training Age-Grade Players.
- Exert due influence over any Age-Grade Players in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- For further details of guidelines relating to leaders see www.irishrugby.ie/safeguarding.

GUIDELINES RELATING TO SPORT LEADERS

VETTING

While clubs are responsible for the recruitment of Sports Leaders, and the allocation of roles and areas of responsibility to them, the IRFU will support them through the provision of vetting checks and adherence to the recruitment process.

Vetting should not be seen as a stand-alone procedure and should always be done in conjunction with signed Codes of Conduct (Appendix 1), commitment to training and adherence to the this Safeguarding Policy. Failure to comply with all aspects of club recruitment could result in a Sports Leader not being offered position within the Club / Branch / Union.

The decision to appoint Sports Leaders is the responsibility of the club and not one individual within it. Good practice in management and supervision of Sports Leaders after appointment is as important as adherence to recruitment policies and procedures.

BRANCHES AND CLUBS:

- Must carry out vetting in line with current legislation (educate themselves and their officers about checking:) vetting for Employees and Sports Leaders in Regulated Activity (NI); (ROI Vetting) and /or vetting for Employees and Sports Leaders in the manner directed by the National Safeguarding Officer.
- Must work with the National Safeguarding Officer without delay in relation to a risk assessment of the criminal record and convictions (for violence, abuse or neglect of children and related offences) of each of its employees and Sports Leaders.
- Must follow the directions of the IRFU concerning any employee or Sports Leader.

For IRFU vetting documents, see www.irfu.ie/safeguarding.

WHO SHOULD BE VETTED?

- All those (in ROI) involved in 'relevant work', that is work or activity that is carried out by a person, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children or vulnerable adults.
- All those (in NI) who work in 'regulated activity', that is work or activity that involves teaching training, caring for and supervision of children 'frequently' (once a week or more) or 'intensively' (4 or more days in a 30-day period or overnight).
- Parents who give lifts to rugby events would come under the 'occasional' usage term and would not need to be vetted, likewise appointed referees who would not work with the same teams on a regular basis. It is good practice to give such adults working with Age-Grade Players this Safeguarding Policy's Code of Conduct, see Appendix 3 & 4.

SUPERVISION AND SAFETY

ADULT/AGE-GRADE 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 Age-Grade Players are 11 years of age or older. For younger Age-Grade Players or players with a disability or situations involving travel, the ratio should decrease depending on the requirements or the activity the Age-Grade Players will be involved in.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Age and gender of the Age-Grade Players.
- Any special needs of the age-grade players.
- Where both genders are involved try to ensure a mix of male and female adults.
- Type of activity (training, traveling or social) to be undertaken.
- Time involved.
- Experience of the Sports Leaders and relevant adults involved.
- Previous experience with Age-Grade Players or club and likely behaviour.
- Location of activity or event and type of travel involved.
- Suitability of the Sports Leaders and adults.

ENSURE:

- Age-Grade Players are not left unattended and adequate numbers of Sports Leaders are available to supervise all formal activities, i.e. coaching sessions, matches, blitzes and other organised rugby activities.
- Sports Leaders know where the Age-Grade Players are and what they are doing.
- Dangerous behaviour should not be tolerated at any stage, (use Age-Grade Players Code of Conduct, Appendix 3).
- Ensure the respect for the privacy of all Age-Grade Players, especially in changing rooms, showers and toilets.
- All Age-Grade Players are informed beforehand of what behaviour will be accepted and not accepted from them, See Code of Conduct, Appendix 3.
- Those who are operating in a supervisory role should have access to adequate first aid resources.

SAFETY PRACTICES:

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

Some points to consider:

SUPERVISION AND SAFETY

AGE-GRADE PLAYERS

- Have defined criteria for membership of the club.
- Have a registration system for all players (and upload to clubhouse).
- Ensure there are sufficient facilities for the number of Age-Grade Players and Sports Leaders.
- Keep a record on each player regarding medical details and needs as well as all contact numbers.
- Ensure that all activities are properly supervised.
- The IRFU insurance, which is limited in nature and extent, covers all registered players. It is strongly recommended for Age-Grade Players to have also their own personal accident insurance cover in place.

SPORTS LEADER:

Ensure:

- Follow the recommended adult:child supervision ratios.
- Have completed the IRFU's recruitment process, including signing the Declaration of Intent, Appendix 1.
- Have a clear title and area of responsibility.
- Have attended appropriate coaching courses and related safeguarding and welfare training.

Information in relation to facilities and equipment for training sessions as well as dealing with accidents/injuries can be found at:
www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/Supervision_and_Safety.pdf

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 Age-Grade 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.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Ensure all arrangements are suitable for the journey to be undertaken.
- Vehicles must be roadworthy and appropriate and the driver to understand that he/she is responsible for the vehicle during the trip, including use of booster seats if necessary.
- Ensure parental consent is obtained prior to journeys being undertaken, see statement of consent, Appendix 2.
- All journeys to take place under the supervision of the team management.

BUS / COACH HIRE:

Ensure:

- When renting, make sure you deal with a reputable company.
- Make sure the vehicle is suitable and equipped with appropriate safety features according to the rules of the road.

SUPERVISION AND SAFETY

PASSENGER CARS:

Although this is the most frequently used option it is important to ensure that the safety of all Age-Grade 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. This can be done seasonally, see Appendix 2.
- Vehicles must be roadworthy, safe and have appropriate insurance cover.
- Drivers must have a suitable drivers licence.
- All passengers must use seat belts and booster seats (where necessary) 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.

HOSTING MATCHES:

To ensure Age-Grade 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.

Further information on hosting overnight stays and other forms of transport is available on www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/Travel_Hosting_Touring.pdf

COMMUNICATION, IMAGES AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

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

For further information see www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/Communication_Images_and_Social_Networks.pdf

BULLYING

Bullying is **repeated** aggression, be it verbal, physical or psychological, by an individual or group against others, which causes significant harm to the victim(s). It is intentional, aggravating and intimidating.

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.

DEALING WITH BULLYING?

Bullying should always be considered in conjunction with the Codes of Conduct referred to in this Safeguarding Policy. Poor practice should always be tackled early, warnings should be given and in the case of Age-Grade Players especially, there should be an opportunity to correct the poor behaviour.

Persistent poor practice may escalate into bullying if allowed to go unchecked. More extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reportable to Health Service Executive or An Garda Síochána or the PSNI.

It is the responsibility of the club to deal with bullying that may take place. You can use the ISPCC reporting tool where necessary, www.ispcc.ie/ispcc-shield-/stand-up-report-tool/12531

Each club should have a statement on bullying that is visible to all and can be implemented by Sports Leaders. Incidents must be dealt with immediately and should not be tolerated.

For further information see www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/Bullying.pdf

www.ispcc.ie/file/424/21/1/15_0/ISPCC+IRFU+Shield+My+Club+Self-Evaluation+Tool+FEB+2015+with+cover+page.pdf

www.irishrugby.ie/news/33933.php

SMOKING, ALCOHOL, SUPPLEMENTATION AND AGE GRADE PLAYERS' WELFARE

As part of IRFU's commitment to protecting the health and well-being of Age-Grade Players and to ensuring Age-Grade Players thrive within a safe and fun environment, IRFU request that branches and clubs, Sports Leaders and Age Grade Players:

- Must not promote, condone or use sports supplements contrary to the IRFU Guidelines and Recommendations, "Sports Supplements and Young Rugby Players";
- Must participate in the education of themselves and others about the detrimental effects of using substances taken to enhance performances.

Functions and facilities of whatever kind attended by Age-Grade Players must be managed in a manner which recognises the potential detrimental effect of alcohol.

It is a priority to ensure that the culture and practices on premises associated with rugby and to which Age-Grade Players are exposed will prevent and discourage alcohol abuse.

SMOKING

- Smoking should be avoided by the Age-Grade 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.

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. Sports Leaders should ensure Age-Grade Players are aware of the dangers of alcohol abuse.

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 effect 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 Age-Grade 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 Age-Grade 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.

NUTRITION AND SUPPLEMENTATION

- Age-Grade Players should focus on good eating and drinking practices to support optimum performance. Fact sheets to support this are available through the IRFU www.IrishRugby.ie/eat2compete.
- The use of protein supplements should not be recommended Sports Leaders, or others involved in the training of Age-Grade Players.
- The IRFU strongly advises against the use of nutritional ergogenic aids, in particular creatine, in Age-Grade Players.
- Age-Grade Players with medical conditions (for example diabetes, asthma, coeliac disease and nutritional allergies) should receive appropriate medical and nutritional advice to assist their optimum performance.

For further information see www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/fitness/theyoungplayer/index.php and www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/fitness/nutrition/supplements_and_the_young_player.php.

POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

Sport can contribute positively to the Age-Grade Player's mental health, helping them to feel good about themselves and cope with everyday pressures in their lives.

Sport can make a positive contribution if the Age-Grade Player's experience of sport reflects sport's positive values, such as fun, inclusion and fair play. However research has shown that when contested in a harmful environment sport can negatively impact on a child's life. NSPCC research stated 10% of young people involved in sport had self-harmed, highlighting the need for sports organisations to safeguard an athlete's health and well-being.

Sports Leaders can help Age-Grade Players by encouraging them:

- To have control over their emotions and their behaviour both on and off the pitch.
- To be aware of their thoughts and feelings towards themselves and others
- To manage their thoughts and feelings rather than becoming overwhelmed.

For further information see, www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/Mental_Well-Being.pdf



SECTION FOUR

Child Protection

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 minimise and/or help to remove the risk and to ensure that all procedures are undergone in accordance with statutory guidelines. Harm is defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is significant is determined by the child's health and development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of a similar age, (Children First Guidelines, page 8).

Categories of abuse are outlined in Children First (ROI) and Cooperating to Safeguard Children (NI). Adults working with young people are not expected to be experts in identifying abuse, however in order to fulfil our duty to care it is necessary to know how to forward a concern that meets reasonable grounds

for concern (see below) and how to respond to a child who raises a concern. Further details on categories of abuse and Statutory guidelines can be found at www.irfu.ie/safeguarding or www.tusla.ie/children-first and www.nidirect.gov.uk/reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect.

Sports Leaders should be aware of the sign and types of abuse with the following points being central to the success of this effort:

- Knowledge of the appropriate action and response to be taken.
- Vigilance and avoidance of situations conducive to risk.
- Open, trusting and cooperative relationships within the club and with parents / guardians and others concerned with children's welfare.

DEALING WITH CONCERNS

- Complaints or suspicions of abuse¹⁰ relating to an Age Grade Player wherever and whenever arising must be reported to the relevant Branch Welfare Officer¹¹ without delay who must take immediate steps to safeguard the Age Grade Player and to refer the complaint or suspicion of abuse to the Statutory Authorities¹² and to the National Safeguarding Officer.
- Procedures for making, investigating and determining complaints about abuse (including confidentiality conditions) should be prescribed in writing, published so that they are readily available to everyone and followed as soon as possible upon receipt of a complaint.
- A Sports Leader against whom a complaint relating to abuse of an Age-Grade Player is made to one of the Statutory Authorities may be asked to step aside as a Sports Leader until after the relevant determination has been made. Reasonable steps will be taken to protect Age-Grade Players
- The National Safeguarding Officer must be notified by the relevant Branch Welfare Officer of all allegations of abuse relating to a Sports Leader or Employee and all questions from the National Safeguarding Officer and/or National Protection Officer must be answered immediately.
- It is not the role of the person who conveys a complaint or suspicion about abuse of an Age Grade Player to determine the guilt or innocence of the accused but every complaint must be made and acted upon without delay.

¹⁰ See Children First Guidance and Our Duty to Care for definitions.

¹¹ Unless the complaint relates to that person in which case the National Child Welfare Officer must be informed.

¹² See Para. 5.12.1 and Appendix 12 of the Sports Councils' Code..

REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR CONCERN

A concern should be passed to Statutory Authorities if any of the following criteria are in place:

- Specific indication from a child that s/he has been abused.
- An account by a person who saw the child being abused.
- Consistent indication, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.
- Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour that is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way.
- Corroborative indicators supporting a concern e.g. pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indicators of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour

RESPONSE TO AN AGE-GRADE PLAYER

- Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent manner though listening to and facilitating the Age-Grade Player to tell about the problem.
- Stay calm and do not show any extreme reaction to what the Age-Grade Player is saying and take it seriously.
- Permit the Age-Grade Player to speak without interruption, accepting what is said.
- Reassure the Age-Grade Player 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, the Club Welfare Officer, or Statutory Authorities, 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 National Protection Officer.
- Do not trivialise child abuse issues or exaggerate what the Age-Grade Player has told you.

REPORTING CONCERNS / 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 Statutory Authorities.
- Clubs or Branches should not carry out their own internal investigations into cases where child abuse is suspected. Make contact with duty social workers in your local area, www.tusla.ie/get-in-touch/duty-social-work-teams/ (ROI) and (NI) www.nidirect.gov.uk/gateway_teams_contact_details.pdf?rev=1
- 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 Statutory Authorities and/or IRFU.
- It may be appropriate for a person to discuss concerns they have with another person in the club, e.g. Club Welfare Officer, or should the concern relate to the Club Welfare Officer to the Branch Welfare Officer.
- Within a school, concerns relating to child abuse must be reported immediately to the Headmaster / Principal (DLP).
- In cases where an allegation has been made, then the matter should be reported immediately to the relevant personnel (Branch/National Safeguarding Officer and/or Statutory Authorities).
- Should there be an allegation against a club member – the Club Welfare Officer must be informed so that suspension of the person against whom the allegation has been made, from activities which involve Age-Grade Players, may be carried out until the conclusion of the investigation. This should be done in conjunction with Statutory Authorities so that investigations are not compromised.
- All concerns and allegations made should be carefully recorded and ensure confidentiality is maintained at all stages.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST SPORTS LEADERS

- A Sports 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. Any necessary steps should be proportionate to the level of risk and should not unreasonably penalise the Sports Leader unless necessary to protect the Age-Grade Player.
- Following consultation with and advice from the Statutory Authorities, the Sports Leader should be made aware of the general nature of any allegations made against him/her and of any allegation being made known to the Statutory Authorities.
- In a Sports Leaders case of being suspended should be formally notified by senior personnel within the Club/ Branch.
- The Sports Leader concerned should be afforded the opportunity to present a formal response to the allegation to senior personnel in the Club / Branch. From this point onwards the matter should only be dealt with by the Statutory Authorities.
- In the case of an allegation of child 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 doing so the child will be further endangered.
- Clubs in Northern Ireland or the Ulster Branch have a legal duty to refer someone to the Disclosure and Barring Service if they have followed their organisations disciplinary procedures and:
 - Sacked or removed the person from their voluntary role because they harmed a child or vulnerable adult;
 - Sacked them or removed them from working in regulated activity ([link to www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-check-eligible-positions-guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-check-eligible-positions-guidance)) because they might have harmed a child or adult otherwise; or
 - Where planning to sack or remove them for either of these reasons, but the person resigned first.
 - An employer or voluntary club/organisation is breaking the law if they don't refer someone to the DBS in any of the above circumstances.

CONCERNS IN RELATION TO AGE-GRADE PLAYERS

Some concerns may not meet the criteria of 'significant harm' or constitute 'reasonable grounds for concern' that would require making a report to the Statutory Authorities but the complaint may require a response.

- Should you witness or receive information that leads you to believe that a serious breach of this Safeguarding Policy has occurred, you are required to bring the matter to the attention of the relevant personnel (Club Welfare Officer, Branch Welfare Officer and/or National Safeguarding Officer).
- You are not to discuss the matter with persons not already involved, except with the expressed permission of the investigating authorities.

- You are required to give every assistance possible to the Statutory Authorities, 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.
- If you have evidence of an illegal activity that directly relates to the Game, you are obliged to inform the Gardai/PSNI and you should notify the Branch and the IRFU of that fact.

For further information on the above visit www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/development/safeguarding/concerns.php



APPENDICES

One	Declaration of Intent	36
Two	Sign-up Form Age-Grade Player	38
Three	Codes of Conduct	40
Four	Referees Code of Conduct	42
Five	Club Action Plan	44

APPENDIX ONE - DECLARATION OF INTENT

This Declaration of Intent is for Sports Leaders & relevant personnel working in regulated activity and/or with regular & continuous access to young people and vulnerable adults. Sports Leaders and relevant personnel should familiarise themselves with IRFU's Safeguarding Policy, in particular this 'Code of Conduct'. Sports Leader & relevant personnel should read and agree to abide by these terms, and should update the self-declaration questions annually. This is to be done in conjunction with a vetting check.

IN RUGBY, I AGREE THAT I SHOULD

- Be positive during sessions and competitions, praise and encourage effort as well as results.
 - Put welfare of Age-Grade Player first, strike a balance between this and winning / results.
 - Encourage fair play and treat Age-Grade Players equally.
 - Recognise developmental needs, ensuring activities are appropriate for the individual.
 - Plan and prepare appropriately.
 - Have experience relevant to working with young people or hold up-to-date qualifications and be committed to the guidelines in this Safeguarding Policy.
 - Involve parents where possible and inform parents when problems arise
 - Keep a record of attendance at training and competitions.
 - Keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken.
 - Keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes, if behavioural problems arise.
 - Report any concerns in accordance with this Policy's reporting procedures.
- Where possible I will avoid*
- Spending excessive amounts of time with Age-Grade Players away from others.
 - Taking sessions alone.
 - Constant communication with individual Age-Grade Players by mobile phone or email or social media forums.
 - Taking Age-Grade Players to my home.
 - Taking Age-Grade Players on journeys alone in my car.
- I understand that I should not:*
- Use any form of physical punishment or physical force on an Age-Grade Player, or ridicule or intimidate Age-Grade Players in any way.
 - Exert undue influence over any Age-Grade Players in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.
 - Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and /or make sexually suggestive comments about, or to an Age-Grade Player. This includes innuendo, flirting or inappropriate gestures and terms.
 - Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult.
 - Undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis, massage, etc.) in the training of Age-Grade Players.

APPENDIX ONE - DECLARATION OF INTENT

SELF-DECLARATION

I agree that

- I will abide by the guidelines contained in the IRFU Safeguarding Policy.
- I have not been asked to leave a sporting organisation?
- There is no reason why I should not be working with young people and vulnerable adults and/or in a regulated activity?
- I have not been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution; a Bound Over Order; or am not at present the subject of criminal investigations?

IRFU DECLARATION OF INTENT

I, _____
 of _____ Club,
 hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the IRFU's Safeguarding Policy. I also acknowledge that I have read the Policy and hereby declare my intention to adhere to the Safeguarding Policy and related guidelines. I will also support related initiatives by the IRFU and Sports Councils.

CWO

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Sports Leader

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

All age-grade Sports Leader to receive a copy of the Safeguarding Policy. They should also sign the Declaration of Intent declaration above if working 'regularly and continuously' with young people as part of the recruitment process. They should complete the vetting process, (www.irishrugby.ie/safeguarding).

In conjunction with this recruitment process, the club will provide adequate supervision and any necessary training to avoid the Sports Leader having to work alone or unprepared.

APPENDIX TWO - SIGN UP FORM FOR AGE-GRADE PLAYER

The information below should be used in conjunction with the IRFU Players Registration Form in the IRFU Clubhouse system, all players should be registered, speak to the club's registration secretary for further information.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Full Name of Age-Grade Player

Male **Female**

Address

[illegible]**Telephone/Home****Telephone/Mobile (in case of emergency)**

Telephone Mobile of Age Grade Player***

E-mail

DOB

Medical/Behavioural Information

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

MEDICAL/BEHAVIOURAL INFORMATION

Most details can be captured by IRFU Player Registration Form but ensure that you have:

included all details that might be relevant in dealing in with your child in a safe manner, such as allergies, medication, special needs, behavioural issues, etc

APPENDIX TWO - SIGN UP FORM FOR AGE-GRADE PLAYER

PARENTAL CONSENT

I am the Parent of

(Insert name of Age-Grade Player)

I hereby consent to the above Age-Grade Player participating in activities of the club/organisation in line with the IRFU's Safeguarding Policy. I will inform the club of any changes to the information above. I confirm that all details are correct and I am able to give parental consent for my child to participate in and travel to all activities. I am happy for me and my child to receive appropriate information/communication through text, email and social media.

I have seen and agree to abide by the Parents Code of Conduct contained within this Safeguarding Policy. I have read Age-Grade Player's Code of Conduct and discussed it with my child. I will endeavour that they should abide by it at all times.

I understand that photographs/videos will be taken during or at rugby related events and may be used in

the promotion of the game, including social media. I am happy for the club to make appropriate the travel arrangements for my child.

I acknowledge that the club is not responsible for providing adult supervision for my child except for formal age-grade coaching, matches and competitions.

If selected on representative teams I am satisfied that my child will comply with IRFU and ISC anti-doping procedures and that the Union/Branch will receive all relevant information contained on this form

Signature

Printed Name

***** Inclusion of your child's mobile number implies consent to contact them directly**

APPENDIX THREE – CODES OF CONDUCT

AGE-GRADE PLAYERS

- Play for enjoyment and become part of the rugby family.
- Respect the 'Game of Rugby' and play within the Laws of the Game.
- Accept the referee's decision and let your captain or coach ask any relevant questions.
- Play with control. Do not lose your temper.
- Always do your best and be committed to the game, your team and your club.
- Be a 'good sport'. Applaud all good play whether by your team or the opposition.
- Respect your opponent. Treat all players as you would like to be treated. Do not 'bully' or take advantage of any player.
- Rugby is a team sport and make sure you co-operate with your coach; team-mates and members of your club.
- Remember that the goals of the game are to have fun, improve your skills and feel good.
- At the end of the match thank your opponents and the referee for the match.
- Always remember that you owe a duty of care to your opponents. Tackle hard but fairly, do not intend to hurt your opponent.
- Winning and losing is part of sport: Win with humility – lose with dignity.
- As part of the team it is important that you attend training regularly and listen to your coach and help your team.
- As a team sport it is important to understand that all members are important to the team!

- Remember you are representing your team, club, family and the Game of Rugby.

PARENTS

- Remember, Age-Grade Players play rugby for their enjoyment, not only yours.
- Encourage your child always to play by the Laws of the Game.
- Teach Age-Grade Players that honest endeavour is as important as winning, so that the result of each game is accepted without disappointment.
- Help Age-Grade Players to work towards skill improvement and good sportsmanship.
- Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides.
- Never ridicule, humiliate or shout at Age-Grade Players for making a mistake or losing a match.
- Do not place emphasis on winning at all costs.
- Do not force an unwilling child to participate in the playing of rugby. If the child is to play, he/she will do so in good time through your encouragement.
- Support all efforts to remove verbal & physical abuse from rugby.
- As a spectator do not use profane language or harass referees, coaches or Age-Grade Players.
- Do not publicly question the referee's judgement and never their honesty.
- Recognise the value and importance of volunteer referees and coaches.
- Identify and acknowledge the good qualities of the Game of Rugby and uphold these values.

APPENDIX THREE – CODES OF CONDUCT

- Remember you and your child's contribution to the Game of Rugby is very important to the IRFU and be proud of your contribution.
- Understand the value of team sport and its importance.

SPECTATORS

- Remember that although Age-Grade Players play organised rugby they are not 'miniature internationals'.
- Be on your best behaviour and lead by example. Do not use profane language or harass referees, players or coaches.
- Applaud good play by the visiting team as well as your own.
- Show respect for your team's opponents. Without them there would not be a match.
- Condemn the use of violence in all forms at every opportunity.
- Verbal abuse of Age-Grade Players or Sports Leaders cannot be accepted in any shape or form.

- Age-Grade Players or Sports Leaders are not fair targets for ignorant behaviour.
- Encourage Age-Grade Player to play by the Laws of the Game.
- Spectators can contribute to the enjoyment of the event and all involved.
- Be proud of your club and the Game of Rugby.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR SPORTS LEADERS

- Remember that as a Sports Leader of an 'Age-Grade team' you are acting 'in loco parentis' and that you have a duty of care to all your Age-Grade Players.
- Always follow professional medical advice in determining when an injured Age-Grade Player is ready to play again.
- Adhere to policies for your club / team to agree procedures regarding discipline, injury prevention & treatment, team selection etc.
- Be reasonable in your demands on the Age-Grade Players' time, energy and enthusiasm.

APPENDIX FOUR - CODE OF CONDUCT FORM FOR REFEREES

Referees should familiarise themselves with the IRFU Safeguarding Policy, (www.irishrugby.ie/safeguarding) and in particular the Code of Conduct below. Referees should read and agree to abide by these terms. Referees should update the self-declaration questions annually. Branch referees should be members of their Branch Association/Society and adhere to rules and procedures as agreed by the Branch Association/Society.

***** Referees appointed through their Association/Society will sign the Declaration and Code of Conduct as outlined below.**

***** All referees should carry out the necessary training and attend support workshops as outlined by their Association / Society.**

AS A REFEREE IN RUGBY I AGREE THAT I SHOULD

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every Age-Grade Player and treat everyone equally, regardless of gender, disability, ethnic origin, religion, etc.
- Put welfare of Age-Grade Player first.
- Encourage fair play and ensure safety is paramount in all games.
- Facilitate the playing of the game through the correct application of the laws of the game.
- Plan and prepare appropriately, be punctual.
- Hold up-to-date referee qualifications and be committed to the guidelines in the IRFU's Safeguarding Policy.
- Act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of rugby and maintain highest standards of personal conduct.
- Be responsible for monitoring boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with Age-Grade Players.
- Remain positive when dealing with Age-Grade players and/or coaches, parents and spectators.
- Manage disciplinary matters appropriately, report to the Branch when necessary.
- Follow agreed protocols regarding changing rooms.
- Report any concerns in accordance with this Policy's reporting procedures, Section 4 of IRFU Safeguarding Policy.

Where possible I will avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time with Age-Grade Players away from others.
- Constant communication with individual Age-Grade Players by mobile phone or email or social media forums.
- Taking Age-Grade Players to my home.
- Taking Age-Grade Players on journeys alone in my car.

I understand that I should not:

- Use any form of physical punishment or physical force on a child.
- Exert undue influence over a participant
- Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and /or make sexually suggestive comments about, or to an Age-Grade Player. This includes innuendo, flirting or inappropriate gestures and terms.

APPENDIX FOUR - CODE OF CONDUCT FORM FOR REFEREES

SELF-DECLARATION

I agree that

- I will abide by the guidelines contained in the IRFU Safeguarding Policy and Branch Association / Society regulations.
- I have not been asked to leave a sporting organisation?
- There is no reason why I should not be working with young people and vulnerable persons and/or in a regulated activity?
- I have not been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution; a Bound Over Order; or am not at present the subject of criminal investigations?

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

***** Branch referees appointed regularly by their club and school (but separately from their Association / Branch***) may be asked to complete additional checks in relation to the role they are holding, e.g. an underage referee who works with the same club and team each week throughout the season will be asked to complete a vetting check.**

***** Club and School Affiliate Referees are not Branch referees. The responsibility for appointment of club and school referees lies with their club. Thus club and school affiliate referees who are regularly appointed or volunteer for matches for their club or school will be asked to complete a vetting check, see www.irishrugby.ie/safeguarding Responsibility lies with the club to ensure safe recruitment of referees to games.**

APPENDIX FIVE - CLUB SAFEGUARDING ACTION PLAN

The following is a sample list of duties of the Club Welfare Officer and can be completed with support from the Branch.

Areas of Responsibility Compliance and Policy Implementation	Happening in the Club Y/N	Evidence	By Whom	By When
Ensure the club has adopted the IRFU Safeguarding Policy.				
<p>Ensure records on each age-grade member are up-to-date and held in line with data protection, including any special needs of the age-grade player that should be known to leaders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of parental consent form with relevant medical information and permission to participate. • Records stored online and secured in 'clubhouse'. • Codes of Conduct for age-grade players on view. 				
<p>To ensure each Age-Grade Leader has completed an appropriate selection process, including necessary vetting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed Codes of Conduct with Self-Declaration questions stored securely on 'clubhouse', successfully completed a vet. • Vetting invite issued and ID check complete through 'clubhouse'. • Copies of Declaration of Intent held for each volunteer. • Copies of reference forms for visiting/unknown coaches. 				

APPENDIX FIVE - CLUB SAFEGUARDING ACTION PLAN

Areas of Responsibility Compliance and Policy Implementation	Happening in the Club Y/N	Evidence	To Be Done By Who	To Be Done By When
<p>To ensure that the club bye-laws and regulations include safeguarding policies as outlined in IRFU safeguarding policy, including evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints, disciplinary and appeals procedures for age-grade welfare concerns. • The anti-bullying statement. • Safety Statement - including evidence of risk assessment, templates and incident forms. • Rules in relation to traveling with age-grade players, supervision and physical contact, social media, photographic guidelines. • Review club bye-laws, rules and regulations with the club's executive by sitting on committee or having access to management meetings. 				
<p>To ensure reporting procedure is widely distributed in the club:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of reporting procedure on website/displayed within club premises. • Name of National Safeguarding Officer listed within club. • Name of Branch Welfare Officer listed within club. • Process for dealing with allegations against Sports Leaders known to club management 				

APPENDIX FIVE - CLUB SAFEGUARDING ACTION PLAN

Areas of Responsibility Compliance and Policy Implementation	Happening in the Club Y/N	Evidence	To Be Done By Who	To Be Done By When
<p>To monitor changes in membership and follow up any unusual dropout, absenteeism or club transfers by age-grade players or adult volunteers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use clubhouse to monitor drop out at end of season. • To randomly complete exit interview with at least 6 players each season. • Complete exit interview with volunteer. 				

APPENDIX FIVE - CLUB SAFEGUARDING ACTION PLAN

Areas of Responsibility Child-centered ethos	Happening in the Club Y/N	Evidence	To Be Done By Who	To Be Done By When
<p>To ensure that the age grade players have a voice in the running of the club to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of consulting with players in relation to the age grade activities in the club. • Use of older age-grade players to consult welfare messages across the age grade sector – anti-bullying, code of conduct and additional welfare policies. 				
<p>To ensure that there are steps age-grade players can take to express concerns about their sports activities and experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that age grade players know the name of the CWO and contact details. • Do they know the message of 'one-good adult', highlighting the influence trusted adults have on the young person's positive mental health? • Are bullying posters displayed around the club? • Is there an age-grade-friendly version of the reporting process available in the club? • Is information in a variety of formats to allow for inclusion of age grade players with disability and/or special needs. 				

APPENDIX FIVE - CLUB SAFEGUARDING ACTION PLAN

Areas of Responsibility Compliance and Policy Implementation	Happening in the Club Y/N	Evidence	To Be Done By Who	To Be Done By When
<p>To influence policy and practice within the club in order to prioritise age-grade players' needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does CWO sit on / have access to the club's management committee. Is CWO consulted about changes in the club, age grade rules, disciplinary procedures and other related policies? 				

APPENDIX FIVE - CLUB SAFEGUARDING ACTION PLAN

Areas of Responsibility Information & Advice	Happening in the Club Y/N	Evidence	To Be Done By Who	To Be Done By When
<p>To promote awareness of the safeguarding statement within the club, among age grade members and their parents/guardians.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start of season presentation given by CWO. Section on the club website dedicated to safeguarding, club policy on website and template forms. 				
<p>To host regular information meetings for the age grade players and their parents/guardians so that parents and players know what is expected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation includes season outline, reference to LTPD model, safety information and information re safeguarding policies. Policies made known to parents, codes of conduct, travel and supervision, disciplinary and reporting concerns. 				
<p>To encourage the appropriate involvement of parents/guardians in the club activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents rota for supervision. Arrange appropriate training for all volunteers. Maintain database of all trained personnel, including details of training and dates of training. 				

APPENDIX FIVE - CLUB SAFEGUARDING ACTION PLAN

Areas of Responsibility Information & Advice	Happening in the Club Y/N	Evidence	To Be Done By Who	To Be Done By When
<p>To act as an advisory resource to Sports Leaders on best practice in age grade rugby:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure volunteers have up-to-date information from IRFU, including mini-rugby philosophy and LTPD, nutrition and mental health information / research. Observe that the 'LTPD' philosophy is being practiced by all adults working with age grade players. 				

- LTPD – refers to Long Term Players Development model that governs coaching – see www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/coaching/development_coaching_pathway.php for further information.
- CWO refers to Club Welfare Officer.

