

## Ashford Rugby Football Club

### Safeguarding Policy

**Date: May 2026**

**Review Date: May 2027**

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Ashford RFC is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of **all children, young people and adults at risk** who take part in rugby at our club. We believe that everyone has the right to participate in rugby in a safe, positive and enjoyable environment, free from abuse, harm, bullying or exploitation.

The club recognises its duty of care and will take all reasonable steps to:

- Protect children, young people and adults at risk from harm
- Respond properly to safeguarding concerns
- Create a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Safeguarding is the responsibility of **all club members**, including coaches, volunteers, parents, players and committee members and any concerns should be reported without assumption that someone else will.

#### **1. Recognising Abuse and Poor Practice**

Abuse can include (but is not limited to):

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Bullying or cyberbullying
- Discrimination, harassment or intimidation

Poor practice may include:

- Inappropriate language or behaviour
- Favouritism or exclusion
- Inadequate supervision
- Ignoring welfare concerns

All concerns must be reported, even if there is uncertainty.

## **2. Legal and Governing Body Framework**

This policy supports and reflects:

- The RFU Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- UK safeguarding legislation, including:
  - Children Act 1989 & 2004
  - Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Guidance from NSPCC and Sport England

## **3. Key Principles**

- 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 his safety and wellbeing are protected.
- 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 a right to expect support, and personal and social development delivered by appropriately recruited and vetted personnel and properly managed in relation to their participation in rugby union.
- ARFC 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, and harm and poor practice. ARFC recognises that this is the responsibility of everyone involved, in whatever capacity, at the club.
- ARFC will implement and comply with the RFU Code of Conduct and the Codes of Conduct for Coaches, Spectators and Officials as appropriate, ARFC will ensure its spectators, parents, members and officials are all aware of and will be deemed to have accepted, unless they make it known otherwise to the Safeguarding Officer, the club Photographic Policy as set out in the club welcome pack and on the website.
- ARFC will endeavour to comply with the Guidance for Websites as set out on the RFU website and appended to this document.

#### **4. Safer Recruitment and DBS Checks**

The club will ensure:

- All members of ARFC who work with children in Regulated Activity must undertake an RFU Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check in accordance with RFU Regulation 21.
- References are taken for relevant roles
- Safeguarding training is completed and kept up to date
- Clear roles, codes of conduct and expectations are communicated

#### **5. Designated Safeguarding Officers**

The club DSO is John Heaver

Contact details: [johnpheaver@outlook.com](mailto:johnpheaver@outlook.com) or 07979538770.

If the club safeguarding officer is not available then Lisa Wilson, Assistant Club Safeguarding Officer should be contacted:

Contact details: [Lmkeane@hotmail.com](mailto:Lmkeane@hotmail.com) or 07891 556050

#### **6. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns**

If you witness, or become aware of an incident where the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult has been put at risk (for example by emotional /physical bullying), you MUST in the first instance inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

The club Safeguarding Officer will then inform the CB Safeguarding Manager and the RFU Safeguarding Executive,

If an incident involves the Club Safeguarding Officer you should inform the Chairman of the Club who will then contact the CB Safeguarding Manager or the RFU Safeguarding Executive.

#### **7. Responding to Safeguarding concerns**

The club will:

- Take all concerns seriously
- Act promptly and proportionately
- Seek advice from the RFU or statutory agencies where appropriate
- Support those affected
- Maintain confidentiality on a need-to-know basis

ARFC will, where appropriate and following discussion with the RFU/CB Safeguarding Manager, form a Safeguarding Committee to review reported incidents. The Committee will at all times act in accordance with the Club and RFU safeguarding policies and with the approval of the RFU/ CB Safeguarding Manager.

## 8. Code of conduct

ARFC requires all its members, whether they are coaches, parents, players, or officials to comply with the Best Practice Guidance as issued by the RFU and the Club's own code of conduct policies. 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.
- Consuming alcohol whilst responsible for children.
- Providing alcohol to children or allowing its supply.
- Humiliating children.
- Inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a child.
- Participating in, or allowing, contact or physical games with children.
- Having an intimate or sexual relationship with any child developed as a result of being in a position of trust
- Making sexually explicit comments or sharing sexually explicit material

ARFC will ensure 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.

ARFC will ensure that its coaches and team managers receive the support and training considered appropriate to their position and role.

No player may play adult rugby (or train with adults) until he or she has reached their 18th birthday unless they fully comply with the relevant RFU regulations, in summary:

Assessed as capable of playing with adults.

Agreement to this fact obtained from the ARFC Director of Rugby.

The above applies to senior training as well as matches. Age group coaches should not send their players to train with the seniors if the above does not apply including during pre season.

Any events held on ARFC 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 ARFC must comply with the relevant RFU Regulations and Guidance relating to tours.