

# CHILD PROTECTION AND GOOD PRACTICE

## POLICY STATEMENT

Royal High Corstorphine RFC recognises that all adults involved in the coaching of supervision of children associated with the Club have a duty to safeguard the welfare of those children. This duty extends to the prevention of physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children associated with the Club and shall be applied regardless of a child's gender, race, religion or disability.

The Club's Child Protection Co-ordinator is

**Mr Philip Williams**

(Contact No 0131 312 8581 or 07771 954985 or [williamsphilip@sky.com](mailto:williamsphilip@sky.com).)

The Club's Director of Rugby is

**Mr Graham Duff**

(Contact No 0131 445 7030)

A copy of the CHILD PROTECTION AND GOOD PRACTICE document is available from either of the above name Club Officials or from the Club Secretary.

## The Coach – Athlete Relationship

Coaches – particularly of children – hold a powerful and unique leadership role, often carrying considerable authority and status. A closeness and mutual trust often accompany this role usually only held between parent and child. Coaches often unwittingly or wittingly assume this power and authority, and occasionally this influence spills over into a child's personal life. One of the challenges coaches repeatedly face is how to manage this potential power and balance the responsibility and safe boundary between coach and performer. The challenge to do this is exacerbated by the need for coaches to build high levels of trust from children – particularly those involved in elite performance – to encourage them to change their behaviour to develop the level of commitment required to achieve their potential.

Coaches of young children start by using their authority role to build a strong relationship or bond. Over time this hopefully positive influence can grow to be extremely strong and it is from this influence that trust grows.

Where trust is given, there exists the potential for the abuse and misuse of power by a coach. This may be as a result of thoughtlessness, negligence or occasionally wickedness. Even the passive abuse of power by a coach e.g. by questioning loyalty or commitment, may produce a dangerous level of conformity and emotional dependency in a child.

By seeking conformity and commitment to their own values and ideals, coaches may be exaggerating the need to conform at the price of the child's own personal development, self determination and independence. All coaches should be able to recognise, the negative consequences of the power they may hold and the trust placed in them, by children and parents.

## The Performer – Player Relationship

Coaches, Managers, medical personnel, Development Officers and administrators (hereafter “officials”) who are associated with representative rugby teams have a powerful leadership role where children and young people are concerned. This can result in a closeness and mutual trust usually only held between parent and child. Such officials may unwittingly or wittingly assume this power and authority and occasionally this influence spills over into a child’s personal life. Officials in such positions repeatedly face the challenge of how to maintain a responsible, balanced relationship. This challenge increases as the degree of trust between performer and mentor develops. This occurs with greater intensity at the elite performance level where the demands on the performer are greatest.

It is the role of the responsible adult to grow a positive bond of trust with the performer to ensure optimal performance. It is where this trust is being given that the potential for abuse or misuse of power exists. Such abuse may be the result of thoughtlessness, negligence or occasionally wickedness. Even the passive abuse of power by an official e.g. questioning loyalty of commitment, may produce a dangerous level of conformity and emotional dependency in a child.

The positive bond of trust formed between adult and performer may lead to a relationship where the child may feel able to disclose any abuse which may be taking place against him/her in the home, at school etc. This is in many ways an indication of the success of the adult in building trust, although it can cause the adult distress and anxiety. The adult should be fully aware of the SRU’s guidelines on how to deal with such disclosure or suspicion of abuse and how to review and alter behaviour if the negative consequences become serious or dominate.

By seeking conformity and commitment to their own values and ideals, officials may be exaggerating the need to conform at the price of the child’s personal development, self-determination and independence. All officials involved must recognise the negative consequences of the power they may hold and the trust placed in them by children and parents.

## **COACHES CHARTER**

Coaches must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every player and treat everyone equally within the context of the sport.

Coaches must place the well being and safety of the performer above the development of performance. They should follow the guidelines laid down by the Scottish Rugby Union.

Coaches must develop an appropriate working relationship with players based on mutual trust and respect. Coaches must not exert any undue influence to gain any personal benefit or reward.

Coaches must encourage and guide players to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance.

Coaches must ensure the activities they direct or advocate are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the individual.

Coaches should, at the outset, clarify with players (and where appropriate their parents) exactly what is expected of them and what players are entitled to expect from those in charge.

Coaches should always advocate the positive aspects of Rugby and never condone rule violations of the use of prohibited substances.

## **PROCEDURE FOR COACHES**

All Coaches shall comply with the Coaches Charter.

All Coaches shall complete the Club's "Child's Coach Rugby Registration Form".

All new Coaches/Organisers will be made aware of our policy on Child Protection and Good Practice.

Coaches shall follow the guidelines issued on how to deal with the disclosure of suspicion of abuse.

Coaches shall know whom their Club Child Protection Co-ordinator is.

All activities shall be planned to minimise situations in which abuse may occur.

Officials shall observe the following guidelines to good practice:

- Follow an open door policy in changing rooms and showers
- Prohibit the use of camcorder and cameras in changing rooms and showers. Allow parents access to changing areas when appropriate
- Do not participate in one to one coaching other than during a normal coaching session and always in the presence of other coaches and players
- Do not allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Do not make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child, even in fun
- Do not refer to a child's ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, or sexuality in a way that is derogatory
- Do not allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Do not engage in sexually provocative games or horseplay
- Do not do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves
- Immediately report incidents of inappropriate language, behaviour or abuse by another Coach
- Immediately report incidents of inappropriate language, behaviour or abuse by a child

Parents shall be encouraged to attend matches and coaching sessions and to accept responsibility for ensuring their child's safety.

A Good Conduct Guide for spectators and parents will be distributed with fixture list at the start of the season and to new members.

A current membership list or appropriate checklist shall be available at all activities.

An appropriate first aid kit (coaches shall not attempt to treat injuries unless qualified to do so), to be on hand at all activities.

An Incident Book shall always be on hand to record incidents that may have repercussions for the club, coach or player.

Whilst at coaching/home fixtures and travelling to away fixtures etc children will be kept under the closest supervision and, when appropriate, a "Stay behind" coach will be nominated.

Coaches shall not meet children away from the Rugby Club or meeting place without a parent or other adult being present.

## **Procedures to be followed by officials where Abuse is disclosed or suspected**

### **Create a safe environment**

- Stay calm. Do not rush into actions which may be inappropriate
- Confirm to the child that you know how difficult it must have been to confide in you
- Reassure the child and stress that he/she is not to blame
- Listen to and believe what the child says. Show that you are taking the matter seriously
- Be honest and do not make promises you cannot keep. Explain that you may have to tell one other person in order to stop what is happening.
- Be clear about what the child says so that it can be passed on to Child Protection professionals. Keep questions to a minimum. Avoid closed questions (i.e. ones that can be answered by a single word e.g. yes/no). Use open questions to encourage the child to use his/her own words. Do not lead the child, or suggest words or ideas as to what may have happened.

### **Record:**

- What the child has said to you, in a legible and accurate format in the Incident Book
- Record only facts and observations, not your opinion
- The child's name, address, date of birth
- The date and time of the incident
- Exactly what the child said and what you said
- Actions taken and contact with parents/agencies. Remember names, addresses and phone numbers

### **Ensure**

- You date and sign the record
- The Club Child Protection co-ordinator witnesses the record
- **You maintain confidentiality;** breaches of confidentiality can be very damaging to the child, family and any Child Protection investigations that take place.
- **You do not take sole responsibility.** Consult with the Child Protection co-ordinator or another Coach as soon as possible, so that you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself in a difficult situation.
- **You do not contact parents** if you consider the child to be a victim of sexual abuse or at increased risk.

Rugby Coaches are not generally childcare professionals, but they do work with children and they may pick up upon important non-verbal signals of abuse which, when put together with information from other agencies, form a picture of a child in need of help. Here are some of these signals. A child may show some or none of these and still be suffering abuse and equally, their presence does not always indicate abuse.

**Abuse Indicators: NSPCC Booklet “PROTECTING CHILDREN a guide for sportspeople”**

<i>Types of Abuse</i>	<i>Abuse Indicator</i>	<i>Behavioural Indicator</i>
<i>Physical</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Unexplained bruises, marks, injuries</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Bruises which reflect hand marks</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Cigarette burns</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Bite marks</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Broken bones</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Scalds</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Fear of parent being contacted</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Aggressive or angry outburst</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Running away</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Fear of going home</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Flinching</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Depression</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Keeping arms legs covered</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Reluctance to change clothes</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Withdrawn behaviour</i></li> </ul>
<i>Neglect</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Constant hunger</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Unkempt state</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Weight loss/underweight</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Inappropriate dress</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Missing doctor/hospital appointments</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Truancy/late for school</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Constantly tired</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Few friends</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Regularly alone and unsupervised</i></li> </ul>
<i>Emotional</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Development delayed</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Sudden speech disorder</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Neurotic behaviour</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Unable to play/take part</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Fear of making mistakes</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Sudden speech disorders</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Self harm/mutilation</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Fear of parents being contacted</i></li> </ul>
<i>Sexual</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Pain/itching in genital area</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Bruising/bleeding in genital area</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Sexually transmitted disease</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Vaginal discharge/infection</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Stomach pains</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Pregnancy</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Sudden changes in behaviour</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Becoming aggressive/withdrawn</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Apparent fear of one person</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Running away</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Nightmares</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Unexplained sources of money</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Sexual drawings/language</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Bedwetting</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Overeating/anorexia</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Self mutilation/suicidal</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Secrets which cannot be told to anyone</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Substance/drug abuse</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Advanced sexual knowledge</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Behaving beyond their age</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Not allowed to have friends</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Sexually explicit behaviour</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Telling about the abuse</i></li> </ul>

Officials must be aware that they are not Childcare professionals and that the procedures set down are to be followed immediately they suspect abuse to have taken place. **It is the role of the professional childcare protection agencies to investigate.**





**REGISTRATION FORM**  
**FOR RHC Cougars RFC Youth Rugby Section Coaches**  
*(All details on this form shall be treated as confidential)*

Surname

Previous Surname

Forenames

Present Address

Post Code

Current Employer's Name, Address, & Phone No

**REFERENCES (not a relative)**

Name

Name

Address

Phone No

Phone No

Have you ever had action taken against you in relation to child abuse, sexual offences or violence?

**YES / NO**

Are you known, or have you ever been known to any social services department or the police as an actual / potential risk to children?

**YES / NO**

Do you consent to a Police and / or Social services check?

**YES / NO**

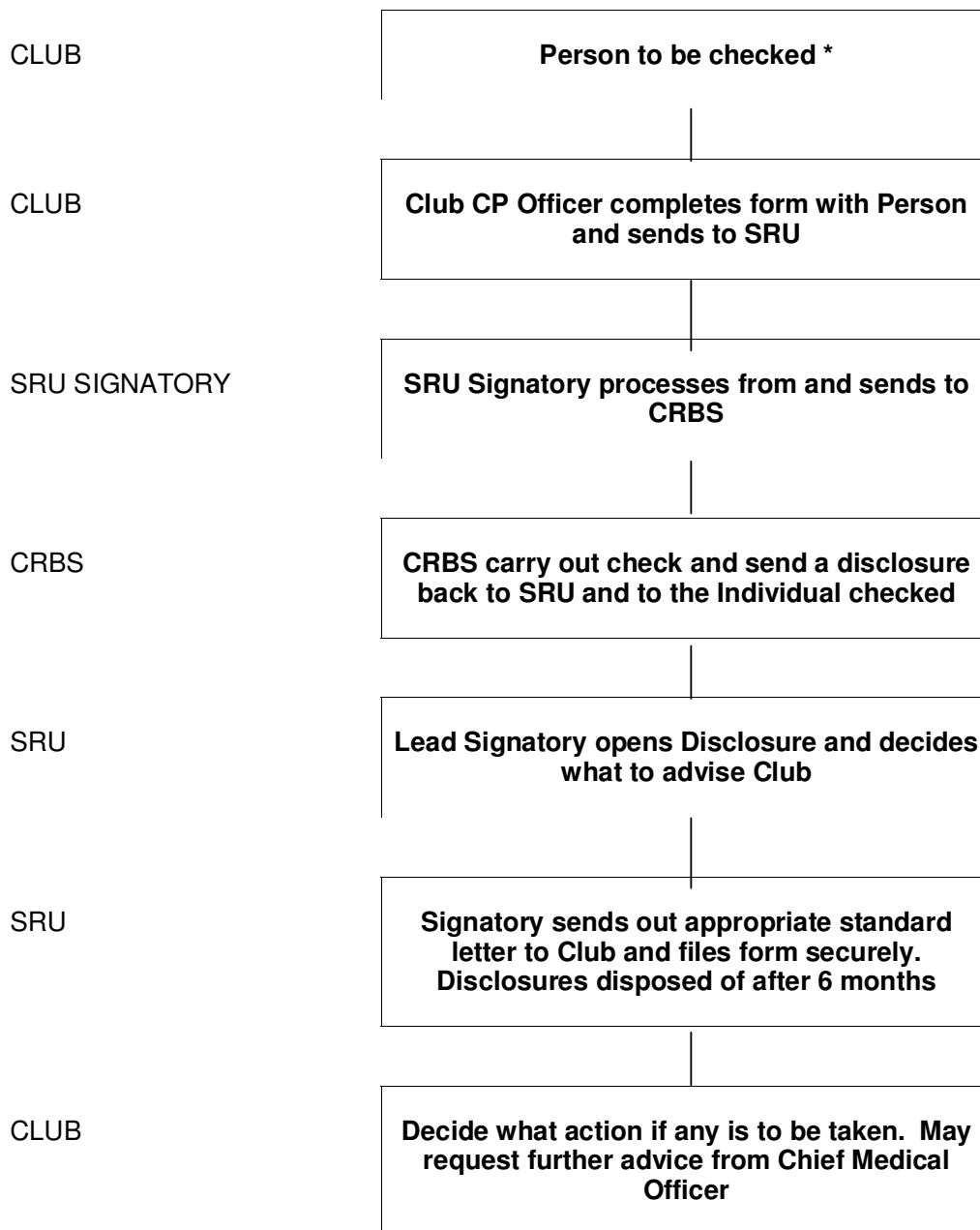
**A failure to disclose information will result in exclusion from.....RFC**

**Signed..... Date.....**

*Please complete and return in a sealed envelope to.....Director of Rugby*

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# Child Protection Flowchart



\* A new Coach or a coach who moves position with Club