



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Children and Adults at Risk

Document control	Detail
Version	3.0
First issued	August 2018
Previous reviews	August 2022, August 2024
This review	August 2026
Next review due	August 2028
Review cycle	Every two years, and whenever RFU regulations, statutory guidance or club circumstances change
Policy owner	Club Safeguarding Officer
Approved by	Board of Trustees
Applies to	All members, players, parents and carers, coaches, volunteers, contractors and visitors

This policy is reviewed every two years, and whenever RFU regulations, statutory guidance or club circumstances change.

Approval and signature

This policy was reviewed and approved on the date below.

	Club Safeguarding Officer
Name	Mary Impey
Signature	
Date	August 10th 2026

Key contacts

If a child or adult is in immediate danger or needs urgent medical attention, call 999 first.



Club

Role	Contact
Club Safeguarding Officer	Mary Impey — 07399 511193 — safeguarding@hackneyrfc.co.uk
Deputy Safeguarding Officer	Vacant
Chair of Juniors	chair.juniors@hackneyrfc.co.uk
President	president@hackneyrfc.co.uk
Discipline Secretary	discipline@hackneyrfc.co.uk
Director of Rugby	dor@hackneyrfc.co.uk
RugbySafe Lead	rugbysafe@hackneyrfc.co.uk

Rugby Football Union

Route	Contact
General safeguarding enquiries	safeguarding@rfu.com
24-hour child protection line	0208 831 6655 — unmanned; response within 24 hours
Reporting a concern	RFU Safeguarding Referral Form, at englandrugby.com/run/safeguarding/sharing-concerns
DBS and safer recruitment	dbseapp@rfu.com
Constituent Body	Middlesex CB Safeguarding — safeguarding@middlesexrugby.com

Statutory and external

Route	Contact
Police / ambulance emergency	999
Hackney Children and Families Service	Contact via hackney.gov.uk . Emergency Duty Team out of hours: 020 8356 2710
Hackney Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Referral via the LADO contact form at hackney.gov.uk/lado
NSPCC helpline	0808 800 5000
Childline	0800 1111



The LADO manages and oversees allegations against anyone who works or volunteers with children. Where an allegation is made against a member of club staff or a volunteer, the Club Safeguarding Officer will report it to the LADO for the relevant borough as well as to the RFU. Members and participants live across Hackney, Islington, Waltham Forest, Haringey and Tower Hamlets; the relevant LADO is the one for the borough in which the incident occurred.

1. Policy statement

The welfare of the child is paramount.

Hackney Rugby Football Club has a duty of care to safeguard all children and adults involved in the club from harm.

All children and adults, regardless of age, gender, gender identity, ability or disability, race, faith, size, language or sexual identity, have a right to protection and to participate in club activities.

The club will ensure the safety and protection of all children and adults involved in Hackney RFC through adherence to the safeguarding guidelines adopted by the club and to RFU Regulation 21.

All allegations and suspicions of harm will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately, recorded, and reported to the appropriate authorities — the RFU Safeguarding Team, the local authority or the police.

All coaches and volunteers affiliated to Hackney RFC will work in partnership to promote the welfare, health and development of children. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children Act 1989).

Core values of rugby union in England

Teamwork. Discipline. Respect. Enjoyment. Sportsmanship.

Club values

Inclusive. Friendship. Community. Respect. Welcoming.

Club motto

Fellowship is life.

2. Aims

The aims of this policy are to promote good practice by:

- providing children, young people and adults at risk with appropriate safety and protection while in the care of Hackney RFC
- enabling all staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific safeguarding issues
- promoting a safe environment in which concerns can be raised and are acted upon



3. Child protection

It is not the responsibility of Hackney RFC to decide whether abuse has taken place. It is the responsibility of everyone at the club to act on concerns by recording and reporting them to the appropriate authorities.

Abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with judgement about the appropriate action to take.

The Club Safeguarding Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services enquiries. Suspension during an investigation is not a presumption of guilt. Where accusations prove groundless and the coach or volunteer is exonerated, they will be supported to return to their role.

Abuse can occur in many settings, including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people or adults at risk in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer has regular contact with young people and adults at risk and is an important link in identifying cases where protection is needed. All cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidance in this document. Poor practice on the part of the Club Safeguarding Officer will be reported to the Discipline Secretary and the Director of Rugby, who will seek advice from the RFU Safeguarding Team.

Where a player enters the club having been subjected to abuse outside the sporting environment, rugby can play a crucial role in improving that player's self-esteem. In such cases the coaches and the Club Safeguarding Officer must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the player receives the support they need.

3.1 Emergencies

If any of the following occur, inform the Club Safeguarding Officer immediately and call 999. Record the incident, setting out clearly what you were told, who you informed, and their response. Do not inform parents or carers unless instructed to do so by the police, Hackney Children and Families Service or RFU Safeguarding.

- A young person discloses that they are at risk of immediate harm. Contact the Club Safeguarding Officer immediately on 07399 511193. In her absence, contact the RFU Safeguarding Team on 0208 831 6655 or safeguarding@rfu.com, call 999 and ask for the police.
- A young person appears to be at risk of self-harm or suicide. If you consider that a young person has the means, the opportunity and the stated intention to harm themselves, call 999 and ask for the ambulance service.

3.2 Disclosures

If a young person discloses that they are being harmed or abused, whether in the past or currently, this must be documented and reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer and to RFU Safeguarding.

- Do not question the person making the disclosure beyond the minimum necessary. Subsequent court proceedings may be jeopardised by probing questions asked before the police and children's services have taken a first account.
- Do not promise to keep it secret. You must report it.



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- Report without delay to the Club Safeguarding Officer on 07399 511193 or safeguarding@hackneyrfc.co.uk.
 - Reports of abuse must not be discussed with the parents or with the adult involved.

3.3 Incidents to report and record

Report the following immediately to another colleague and to the Club Safeguarding Officer, and record the incident:

- a player is accidentally hurt
- a player seems distressed in any manner
- a player appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done

These incidents will be discussed with the parents or carers.

3.4 Protection for those who report

Hackney RFC assures all parents, carers, players, staff and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports a concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a member.

Concerns about the behaviour or practice of any adult working with children or adults at risk must be reported immediately to the Club Safeguarding Officer or the Chair of Juniors.

3.5 Allegations against staff and volunteers

Where an allegation is made against anyone who works or volunteers with children at the club, the Club Safeguarding Officer will:

- take immediate steps to ensure no child is at further risk
- report the allegation to the RFU Safeguarding Team
- refer the allegation to the Local Authority Designated Officer for the borough in which the incident occurred
- consider whether temporary suspension is necessary pending enquiries
- record all decisions, actions and communications

3.6 Inappropriate relationships between adults and children

An adult in a position of trust must not enter into a sexual relationship with a child or adult at risk in their care. Sexual intercourse, sexual activity or inappropriate touching by an adult with a child under 16 is a criminal offence, even where there is apparent consent from the child.

It is an offence for a coach to enter into a sexual or intimate relationship with a child aged 16 or 17. It is a violation of a position of trust and is punishable as a criminal offence.



4. Bullying

The club will keep records of what is said, what happened, by whom and when.

Bullying must be reported to the parents or carers of the victim. They must be assured that the club will investigate, keep them informed, protect their child and work to resolve the situation. They must be dissuaded from approaching the alleged bully or their parents or carers.

Members who bully need the support of their club and their family in order to change their attitude and behaviour. A plan to make amends and reparation to the club and to the victim will be worked out by the Club Safeguarding Officer, the coach, the parents or carers and the Discipline Secretary. The victim and their family must be allowed to contribute to the plan.

It must be borne in mind that some members who bully are themselves victims of abuse.

A referral may need to be made to RFU Safeguarding.

5. Safe environment

A safe environment is one where:

- the possibility of abuse is openly acknowledged
- inappropriate behaviour by members of the public, including spectators, is challenged immediately and recorded
- volunteers and employees are subject to safer recruitment procedures and are trained
- those who report suspicions and concerns are confident that these will be treated seriously and confidentially
- the playing area is free from harmful objects such as used needles, syringes, broken glass and animal faeces

Hackney RFC promotes a smoke-free environment, applicable to coaches, visitors, volunteers and players.

Hackney RFC does not tolerate the use of illegal or performance-enhancing drugs by any player, volunteer or coach. Any volunteer found to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs while performing their duties will be subject to disciplinary procedures.



6. Promoting good practice

All personnel should demonstrate exemplary behaviour, both to protect children and to protect themselves from false allegations.

6.1 Good practice for all volunteers

- Always work in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations, and encourage open communication.
- Treat all young people and adults equally, with respect and dignity.
- Always put the welfare of each person first.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with children and young people. It is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or adult at risk, or to be alone in a changing room with them.
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust, and empower children to share in decision making.
- Be an excellent role model. This includes not smoking, taking illegal drugs or supplements, or drinking alcohol in the company of Hackney RFC junior players, or while training or competing.
- The club will secure written parental consent to act in loco parentis should the need arise to administer emergency first aid or other medical treatment. There will be trained first aiders at every training session and fixture.
- It is the responsibility of parents, not the club, to transport children to and from matches or nominated meeting points. Where parents make arrangements between themselves, this is a private arrangement at the parents' discretion.
- In the event of late collection, coaches and volunteers should attempt to contact the parents or carers, wait with the child preferably in the company of others, notify the Club Safeguarding Officer or a club official, and remind parents or carers of their responsibility to collect promptly. Never leave one volunteer alone with a child; if you are looking after a lone child, ask someone to stay with you.
- Coaches must carry parent or nominated carer contact details to every match and training session.
- Young people must be involved in making the rules for behaviour and expectations. These should be shared with parents and with all volunteers helping with the team.

Make rugby fun, enjoyable and inclusive, and promote fair play.

6.2 Good practice for coaches

- Contact skills must be taught in a safe, secure manner, paying due regard to the physical development of the players involved.
- Adults and children must never play contact versions of the sport together, including training games and contact drills. They may play tag or touch rugby together where these games are managed and organised appropriately.
- Adults may not hold tackle pads or shields for junior players to run into.
- All coaching takes due regard of each player's needs, abilities, aptitudes, age and stage of development.



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- Players for whom English is not their preferred language will be given extra time and support to acquire the skills being taught.
 - Young players should always be coached by known and named adults familiar to them. Visiting coaches should work alongside team coaches, refer any behaviour issues to them, and make themselves familiar with regular practice in the group. Where coaches are absent, every effort should be made to find a substitute, but children must not be coached by strangers.
 - Junior players play and train in age-graded groups in accordance with RFU Regulation 15. Any player who wishes to play in a different age grade must obtain an assessment from the Head Coach, which must be approved by Middlesex Rugby Safeguarding.
 - Volunteers must never use physical punishment, threats, intimidation, refusal to interact with a player, or denial of food, water, warm clothing or use of the toilet to encourage compliant behaviour. De-escalate by talking to the player and offering a chance to cool off and make amends before returning to the activity.
 - Players are motivated by praise and encouragement. Criticism must be constructive and players given clear, achievable goals. Team achievements are celebrated; defeat is accepted with good sportsmanship and viewed as a learning experience.
 - Good session planning with clear expectations helps to minimise problems.

RFU regulations are published at englandrugby.com/governance/regulations. For guidance on Regulation 15 and on session planning, speak to the Director of Rugby.

7. Inclusion

All players have a right to have their individual needs respected and their views heard. Individual risk assessments will be carried out where necessary so that every player can enjoy their rugby at Hackney RFC. The club will ensure that practices, procedures and equipment are tailored to individual needs.

We are committed to providing the experience of playing rugby for all members, and we will work with the player's family and other agencies to ensure that individual needs are met and that every member is able to play safely and free from harm.

- The promotion of performance must not take precedence over a player's wellbeing and safety.
- Players who wish to play in modest attire will be advised how to do so safely.

8. Supervision

No volunteer should be asked to be in sole charge of a group of children. It is the responsibility of the club to ensure that a suitably checked adult is available in an emergency to support the coach at their request.

- In the absence of their parents or carers, children are appropriately and sensitively supervised when using public toilets.
- Parents or carers should help children and adults at risk who require assistance with personal care. In their absence, arrangements should be made for a named and vetted adult known to the parents to undertake this duty. A written plan must be agreed between the assistant and the parent and shared with the Club Safeguarding Officer.
- RFU Trips, Tours and Overnight Stays guidance must be consulted and followed for all tours.



9. Drugs

Hackney RFC promotes a zero-tolerance approach to illegal substances.

Any coach or volunteer found to be, or suspected to be, under the influence of, in possession of, or seeking to supply others with illegal or performance-enhancing substances will be immediately required to cease all volunteering and participation in club activities, and will be reported to the RFU and, where illegal activity is suspected, to the police.

If the volunteer is also the parent of a member, the child's position in the club will not be affected. Hackney RFC will seek to support any member affected by substance misuse.

Any playing member found to be in possession of, or under the influence of, alcohol or illegal or performance-enhancing drugs will be suspended with immediate effect. Their parents or carers and the Club Safeguarding Officer will be informed. If illegal activity is suspected, the police will be informed.

A disciplinary review will be held with the advice and support of the RFU and the police as appropriate. If asked to do so by the parents or carers, the club will consider advice from any other agency already working with the member. A risk assessment will be undertaken before the member is allowed to rejoin their team. The member will be expected to make amends and reparation to their team and coach. Hackney RFC will then seek to support the member to make positive and healthy choices.

10. First aid cover

The club has a responsibility to everyone who attends Hackney RFC events, and especially to players, to ensure an appropriate level of trained first aid cover and that first aiders have the correct equipment.

- There is access to a telephone so that emergency services can be called immediately.
- First aiders hold a recognised first aid qualification or are qualified medical professionals. Acceptable qualifications are the RFU Emergency First Aid in Rugby course, the one-day Emergency First Aid at Work or the three-day First Aid at Work qualification from a registered provider. Qualifications must be renewed every three years.
- A defibrillator is kept in the back storeroom. If you use it, inform the Club Safeguarding Officer and the RugbySafe Lead.
- Team first aiders cover training and games, including away games. Let the RugbySafe Lead and the coaching team know if you will be absent.
- Complete the accident book, and inform the Club Safeguarding Officer every time you treat a casualty.
- Always introduce yourself and ask permission from the casualty before attempting treatment. If they are unconscious, still introduce yourself and explain what you are doing, as they may be able to hear you.
- Ask another trusted adult to remain as a witness and assistant.
- If you need to enter a changing room, take another adult with you, direct children to use another changing room, and do not close the door.
- Avoid removing clothing; ask the casualty or the parents if this is necessary.
- Email parents the head injury protocol even if they are present.
- Email parents confirming any injury you witnessed. They may be asked by a school or by children's services how their child was injured.
- Always work within your knowledge and capability.
- Keep your first aid kit stocked with permitted items. The contents list is at Annex A.



11. Data protection

We collect only the data we need to run the club efficiently and to fulfil our legal obligations and the requirements of the RFU.

Data is stored securely and used only for the purpose for which it was obtained. Volunteers, parents and carers can see data held on themselves or their children, and individuals can apply to have their data removed unless they are involved in coaching, playing or a disciplinary process, by applying to the club administrator.

Data is never sold or passed to third parties. Sponsors and other funding bodies receive data such as the number attending training, not information on named individuals.

Bursary applications are seen by the bursary secretary; the bursary committee sees only anonymised details.

Data protection does not prevent the sharing of information in order to protect a child or adult at risk from harm, or to allow correct medical treatment to be given in an emergency.

All club officials with access to Hackney RFC personal information have a duty of confidentiality. Breaches of confidentiality are a disciplinary matter.

Data breaches will be reported to the individuals whose data has been compromised, and steps taken to repair the breach and prevent recurrence.

11.1 Sharing of electronic material and media

Hackney RFC is mindful of the RFU cyber guidance published on the safeguarding pages of englandrugby.com. Websites can be a positive way to communicate with members, but there are risks associated with internet use.

Hackney RFC is legally responsible for its website content, and nothing should be included which could harm a child or adult at risk, directly or indirectly. It is not acceptable to share sexually explicit or inappropriate material via any form of media with children or adults at risk. The online environment changes continually and this guidance will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

The club is introducing Teamo as its official club management platform, with a separate communications policy. Social media and messaging services such as WhatsApp must be used responsibly. Only players aged 16 and over may be added to WhatsApp groups. Coaches must ensure that there is a minimum of two DBS-checked club volunteers on each chat.

Volunteers, parents, carers and players may choose not to have their image shared on websites or other electronic media. There is no obligation to take part in team photographs or similar events.

12. Safer recruitment and training

Hackney RFC recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children or adults at risk, and takes all reasonable steps to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

The club maintains a list of persons with DBS checks, including the certificate number and date of issue, and ensures that renewals are applied for in good time. Volunteers awaiting clearance must not work directly with children without supervision.

Any person dismissed from the club because of improper or unlawful conduct will be reported to the RFU or other appropriate body.

Volunteers and paid staff will be:



- asked to complete an application form including self-declaration
- required to give references
- interviewed by the Club Safeguarding Officer and one other senior coach or club officer
- given induction information and mentored during induction
- given training, internally and externally, appropriate to their role
- supported by their colleagues and a senior named person
- required to attend safeguarding training if their role involves direct contact with young people or the supervision of such staff

13. Communication of this policy

This policy, and the name and contact details of the Club Safeguarding Officer, are communicated to staff, volunteers, participants, parents and carers by:

- publication on the club website
- inclusion in the welcome information issued to new members and their parents or carers
- display on the noticeboard at Spring Hill
- inclusion in the induction of every coach and volunteer
- circulation through the club management platform at the start of each season

14. Related documents

Document	Status
Hackney RFC Code of Conduct	v1.0, August 2026
Health and Safety policy	To confirm
Equality and Diversity policy	Due for review
Communications policy — Teamo and WhatsApp	v1.0
RFU Safeguarding Children Policy and Regulation 21	Current RFU version applies
RFU Regulation 15 — age grade rugby	Current RFU version applies
RFU Trips, Tours and Overnight Stays guidance	Current RFU version applies



Annex A — First aid kit contents

1 accident book · 2 pens · 1 antibacterial hand gel · 2 large first aid dressings · 2 medium first aid dressings · 1 small first aid dressing · 1 low-adherent dressing pad 10 x 10cm · 2 low-adherent dressing pads 7.5 x 7.5cm · 2 low-adherent dressing pads 5 x 5cm · 10 washproof plasters, assorted · 2 large plasters 8 x 6cm · 2 large plasters 10 x 7cm · 2 large plasters 10 x 9cm · 2 triangular bandages, non-woven · 2 sterile eye pads · 1 pocket mask · 1 microporous tape · 1 pair of shears

1 foil blanket · 2 pairs of first aid gloves · 10 sterile saline wipes · 1 pack sterile swabs 10 x 10cm · 1 pack sterile swabs 7.5 x 7.5cm · 1 pack sterile swabs 5 x 5cm · 1 conforming bandage 10cm · 1 conforming bandage 7.5cm · 1 conforming bandage 5cm · 1 cohesive bandage 5cm · 1 elastic adhesive bandage 2.5cm · 1 pack assorted wound closure strips · 2 sterile saline pods · 1 mouth-to-mouth shield · 6 safety pins · 2 clinical waste bags · 1 sterile saline bottle 250ml · 3 instant ice packs