



CODE OF CONDUCT

Based on the England Rugby Code of Conduct club template, June 2022

Document control	Detail
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Issued	August 2026
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Policy owner	Club Safeguarding Officer
Approved by	Board of Trustees
Basis	England Rugby Code of Conduct club template (June 2022), with additions required by the Middlesex CB pitch-side behaviour policy (v1.0, February 2025)

1. Introduction

At Hackney Rugby Football Club we operate in line with the core values of the game: teamwork, respect, enjoyment, discipline and sportsmanship. We are committed to developing a culture that lives and breathes those values, is free of abuse, discrimination and harm, and where everyone feels safe and able to raise any concerns they have.

Our own values are inclusive, friendship, community, respect and welcoming. Our purpose is to play rugby together, whoever you are.

We are committed to developing an inclusive culture where it is safe and acceptable for everyone involved in rugby to raise concerns about any unacceptable practice, behaviour, wrongdoing or misconduct.

This Code, together with our policies and procedures and the terms of any volunteer or employment agreement with the club, provides a framework within which the club and its participants can create safe, respectful and enjoyable environments.

Everyone involved in rugby, whether as a player, coach, parent, spectator or volunteer, is expected to uphold the core values.

2. The Code

This Code has been adopted by Hackney Rugby Football Club, referred to in this Code as the club, to ensure we operate fairly, appropriately and in the best interests of everyone at the club, including its children and young people. It sets out the behavioural standards that members and other participants of the club must meet.

This Code is a key part of our process for dealing with complaints of poor conduct. It sets the level of expectation when determining any need for formal or informal disciplinary procedures.



3. Rights of individuals

Everyone who participates in activities with the club has the right:

- to enjoy safe participation in rugby, without fear of abuse or harm
- always to be treated with respect and dignity
- not to be pressured into training, competing or participating against their will
- to be treated in line with the core values of the game and the values of the club
- not to be discriminated against on the basis of age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, or pregnancy and maternity
- to challenge poor conduct and discrimination, both when witnessed and when experienced
- to make a complaint or raise a concern, and for it to be taken seriously and acted upon under this Code

4. Conduct

Respectful conduct in rugby is paramount in creating a safe and inclusive culture where children and adults can develop in the sport. Inappropriate behaviour has a detrimental impact on the enjoyment and development of participants, and we therefore expect the core values to be demonstrated by everyone.

The conduct described in this Code extends to conduct on the touchline, in and around the club, and on all online platforms, including messaging and social media.

The lists in sections 5 and 6 are not exhaustive. All participants should familiarise themselves with them.

5. Behaviour we encourage at the club

Members of the club and any other participants are expected and encouraged always to:

Treatment of others

- treat others with respect and dignity, including all officials, spectators, coaches and players, whether from the club or the opposition
- treat each other fairly, and never discriminate or show preferential treatment based on the characteristics listed at section 3.5
- be magnanimous in victory and gracious in defeat
- be welcoming to everyone, whether children or adults
- make sure feedback is positive and constructive, and avoid negative criticism
- accept responsibility for their own actions and conduct

Challenging and reporting

- never tolerate abusive, threatening or intimidating behaviour towards themselves or others. All instances of harassment and abusive or threatening behaviour should be challenged and reported to the club. This includes conduct on match days and non-match days
- work together to create a positive and welcoming club environment where people feel confident in reporting and challenging poor conduct, and take responsibility for acting as role models
- never tolerate cheating, manipulation of competition, use of prohibited substances or methods, or unsportsmanlike conduct, and take responsibility for setting a good example to players
- encourage a healthy environment in which skill development, enjoyment and teamwork are promoted



Working with children and adults at risk

- be friendly, professional and positive role models to children and young people. For example, they should not smoke, vape or consume alcohol when coaching or working with children or young people, or engage in any other behaviour that would be considered inappropriate
- ensure that participants are aware of their responsibilities to safeguard children and young people, and conduct themselves appropriately with other affiliates of the club
- remember that children and young people get a wide range of benefits from taking part in rugby, and that participation should not be centred on winning games but on enjoying the sport and developing skills and fitness
- take ownership of keeping up to date with all club rules, policies and procedures, and remain in keeping with the values of the club

6. Unacceptable behaviour at the club

Members of the club and any other participants must never:

Treatment of others

- engage in any abusive, threatening or bullying behaviour towards anyone at the club, or allow such behaviour to go unchecked and unreported
- use inappropriate language towards participants, including but not limited to sexually suggestive behaviour or language, unwanted or unnecessary physical contact, and language or conduct intended to intimidate or threaten
- challenge, or encourage others to challenge, the decision of any match official
- enter the field of play unless instructed otherwise by the match officials
- use any form of physical force or punishment towards players, spectators or anyone else
- engage in any behaviour that may bring the club or the RFU into disrepute, including any behaviour that is not in line with the core values

Challenging and reporting

- attempt to silence, intimidate or disregard anyone who wishes to raise a concern regarding safeguarding, welfare, discipline, cheating or poor conduct

Working with children and adults at risk

- allow allegations or comments made by a child or adult at risk regarding safeguarding or welfare concerns to be disregarded or go unrecorded
- allow children or young people to engage in inappropriate behaviour amongst one another, including but not limited to bullying, sexually suggestive behaviour or language, intimidating or violent behaviour, or discriminatory behaviour or language
- allow children to carry out rugby activities unsupervised while at the club
- use their position or influence to form inappropriate relationships with any child or adult at risk
- use any type of physical or corporal punishment to discipline a child or adult at risk

7. Pitch-side behaviour

The following are mandatory requirements of the Middlesex CB pitch-side behaviour policy and apply at all age-grade fixtures.



- Spectators must stay behind the designated spectator line or barrier and must not encroach on the playing area.
- Coaches, replacements, water carriers and first aiders must remain in the technical area while the game is in play, except when delivering water during a break in play or entering the pitch to assess or treat an injury.
- Coaches and replacements must not walk along the touchline to follow play, and must not stand in the in-goal area.
- No one may enter the pitch without the authority of the referee.

For under-7 to under-12 fixtures there is no requirement for a physical barrier, but spectators should stand back from the touchline. Hackney RFC will mark a spectator line with cones or tape and explain it before kick-off.

Children's rugby is player centred, development driven and competition supported — in that order.

8. Who the Code applies to

This Code applies to all individuals who participate at the club, referred to throughout as participants, including anyone who:

- holds a role with the club, whether paid or unpaid; or
- is responsible for the care and supervision of a child or adult at risk who attends the club; or
- is involved with the club through a social aspect, such as a customer, member or spectator; or
- attends any club activity, whether on club premises or not, including spectating at home and away matches.

The Code applies to participants whether or not club activity is taking place on club property, including away games and tours.

9. Reporting and disciplinary action

- Report any behaviour you see, witness or experience that upsets you, or makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, to the Club Safeguarding Officer, the Discipline Secretary, the club Committee or the RFU.
- Any breach of this Code may be dealt with in accordance with the club's own disciplinary process.
- Any conduct which is also a breach of RFU or other regulations may be reported to the club's Constituent Body and to the RFU.

Concern	Report to
Welfare of a child or adult at risk	Club Safeguarding Officer — safeguarding@hackneyrfc.co.uk , 07399 511193
Abuse or haranguing of an age-grade player, or of a match official under 18	Club Safeguarding Officer, and the Middlesex CB Safeguarding Manager — safeguarding@middlesexrugby.com . This is a safeguarding matter
Abuse or haranguing of an adult match official	Discipline Secretary — discipline@hackneyrfc.co.uk , for referral to the CB discipline officer
Racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic abuse	Club Safeguarding Officer where directed at a child, or the Discipline Secretary where directed at an adult. Both routes lead to the RFU head of discipline. This is a serious aggravating factor



Concern	Report to
Any other breach of this Code	Club Safeguarding Officer — safeguarding@hackneyrfc.co.uk
Raising a concern directly with the RFU	speakup@rfu.com , or the Speak Up page on the RFU website
Immediate danger or urgent medical need	Call 999

Club disciplinary response

The club will normally deal with a first or minor breach through a conversation rather than a sanction. The purpose of this Code is to change behaviour, not to punish. Where behaviour is repeated or serious, the club may issue a warning, require an apology or other reparation, exclude the person from a fixture, session or the ground for a period, suspend or terminate membership, or refer the matter to Middlesex RFU, the RFU, the police or children's social care.

Where a child breaches this Code, the response will be proportionate to their age and understanding, will involve their parents or carers, and will focus on making amends.

Suspension pending an investigation is not a presumption of guilt.

10. Relevant policies

For further information about expected behaviours and other processes, this Code should be read together with the following:

- Hackney RFC Safeguarding Policy
- Hackney RFC Equality and Diversity Policy
- Middlesex CB RFU, Pitch-side behaviour in age-grade rugby, v1.0, February 2025
- RFU Age Grade Rugby Codes of Practice, v2.0
- RFU Speak Up Policy
- RFU Regulation 15 (age grade rugby), 17 (anti-corruption and betting), 19 (discipline), 20 (anti-doping), 21 (safeguarding)
- RFU Safeguarding Children Policy, Safeguarding Adults Policy and Safeguarding Complaints Policy

11. Adoption

All members, and the parents or carers of junior members, accept this Code as a condition of membership. All coaches and volunteers accept it as a condition of their role.

The Code is published on the club website, issued with membership information, displayed at Spring Hill and included in the induction of every coach and volunteer.



	Club Safeguarding Officer — safeguarding@hackneyrfc.co.uk
Name	Mary Impey
Signature	
Date	August 10th 2026

Annex — Examples of good and poor behaviour

The Middlesex CB pitch-side behaviour policy asks that codes of conduct set out examples of what good and poor behaviour look like. These examples illustrate sections 5 to 7 and are not exhaustive.

This is what we expect	This is not acceptable
Applauding a good tackle or pass by either team	Cheering when an opposition player is hurt
Encouraging a player who has made a mistake	Groaning, sighing or shouting at a player who drops the ball
Accepting a refereeing decision and moving on	Questioning, haranguing or abusing the referee
Standing behind the spectator line	Walking the touchline, or standing in the in-goal area
Letting the coach coach	Shouting competing instructions from the touchline
Welcoming a new player and learning their name	Leaving a new or less able player out of the game
Raising a concern with the coach or Club Safeguarding Officer	Posting a complaint about a child, coach or club matter on social media
Challenging language you find offensive	Dismissing racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic remarks as banter
Telling the coach your child cannot attend	Arriving late repeatedly without notice
Thanking the volunteers who ran the session	Treating volunteers as a service you have paid for