



SAFEGUARDING & PROTECTING CHILDREN IN RUGBY LEAGUE

Newsletter 17 – October 2008

“The Child’s Welfare is Paramount”

ONE CLUB’S PERSPECTIVE ON HOW HAVING A CLUB WELFARE OFFICER HAS IMPACTED ON THE CLUB

“From a club perspective having a CWO in the management structure brings another level of professionalism. This person attends regular training sessions and conferences and is able to keep the whole club updated with changes to policies and procedures. Another positive note for the club is that having a CWO retains players by mediating when a problem arises. I think the most important point of having a CWO at our club is that the position has helped to retain, develop, and increase playing numbers at the club.”

“I have spoken to a parent and a player that has been at the club for a number of years to get their views on CWOs:

‘As a parent of a boy and a girl it is reassuring to know that the organisation that they attend regularly has a CWO in place. I have working knowledge that the benefits of having a CWO are that coaches and other volunteers are regularly checked by CRBs.’

‘Knowing my club has a CWO makes me feel safe, by having someone to talk to if I had a problem with my coach or anyone else in the club’.

CRB EXPIRY DATES

Just a reminder that CRB checks only remain valid for a period of three years after which time a further check should be completed. If you carried out the bulk of your CRB checks some time ago it may be a good idea to check with Stacey whether they are still current.

CRB CHECKS

The RFL would like to remind everyone that only CRB checks which have been carried out through the RFL are valid within Rugby League. CRB checks from other organisations are unfortunately not acceptable.

We would also like to remind clubs not to accept people’s word when they tell you they have a CRB check. CWOs should ask to see the RFL permission granted letter, or alternatively, phone the RFL to check. CWOs should not ask to see the actual CRB Disclosure certificate as this may cause embarrassment if the certificate contains offences which are not relevant to working with children.

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SUBMISSION OF CRB FORMS

The CRB have raised some concerns regarding the length of time that lapses between the applicant signing the form and it being received by the CRB. Please can CWOs send completed forms into us as soon as possible and not wait to 'batch' them as forms with significant time lapses may be rejected by the CRB.

INCORRECT OR INCOMPLETE CRB FORMS

Finally, in order to ensure that CRB Disclosures can be completed as quickly as possible, we would ask that you ensure that all forms are correctly completed before they are sent to the RFL. Forms containing errors will, unfortunately, have to be returned. Common mistakes include:-

Person checking the evidence not putting their name in Section X
Incomplete address history
Date of birth not matching between first page and last page
Insufficient evidence provided
Place of birth missing

The RFL guidance on how to complete CRB forms is available from the Safeguarding Team or from the RFL website.

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

We would like to remind all clubs of the importance of CWOs, coaches and other relevant volunteers receiving some Safeguarding training. The most effective way to do this is to arrange a Safeguarding & Protecting children course at your club. The maximum number of people allowed on this course is 20 and the RFL subsidise the cost so it is only £15 per person (usually £25). This is a SCUK recognised course and counts towards a coach's CPD.

Please contact the Safeguarding team to arrange a course at your club. You could even join up with a neighbouring club or alternatively, if there are only a small amount of people at your club who want to attend a SPC course, then please get in touch and we will advise you of the next course in your area.

You can also source local courses in your area via the Sports Coach UK website – www.sportscoachuk.org, click onto the Quick Locate Workshops and click onto your area. Then click on the workshops for a list of Safeguarding & Protecting Workshops in your area.

COMMUNITY GAME 100% ME ANTI-DOPING TRAINING

Just a reminder that the RFL is now delivering anti-doping education sessions to Community clubs. These sessions are appropriate for players from U15 upwards, coaching staff and volunteers. To request a session, please contact the RFL using the below details. The RFL will then arrange to deliver a session to your club at a convenient time.

CRB CHECKS - ELIGIBILITY

The CRB have raised some concerns regarding CRB applications for individuals who are not eligible. As a reminder, the eligibility criteria for a CRB check are:-

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- Individuals whose normal duties include caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of those under 18 years of age. (e.g coaches, managers)
- Positions where normal duties include supervising or managing an individual in his/her work in a position described above. (e.g. coaching coordinators, chairperson)
- The 'great and the good' in organisations providing services to children or young people. (e.g. committee members)

CRB have stated that they will be monitoring this more actively in future, and as such the RFL will also be monitoring it and may contact you if it is unclear why the application is eligible.

**MOBILE AND ON-LINE COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN
(This advice was prepared for a group of major sports by independent lawyers)**

Technology is moving very fast in this area. There are now many different ways for people to communicate. In addition to land-lines, there are mobile phones for voice and text, and most new phones incorporate cameras that take still shots and video. Two-way video calling is set to grow fast. On-line communication can be by email, instant messaging, chatrooms, and social networking sites.

The risks posed by such methods of communication arise from:

- The privacy. It is usually one-to-one (often chatrooms have the facility for individuals to communicate 1:1 within the chatroom).
- The wide range of content that can be transmitted, including content of a violent, sexual or hateful nature.
- The ease with which images can be forwarded onto others.
- The difficulty in knowing truly who you are communicating with. Where grooming happens, it often involves this type of communication.

In sport, there are additional risks:

- Inappropriate pressure can be exerted by adults, particularly coaches, on children (such as to play when injured).
- There can be inappropriate criticism of a child's performance.
- An official position or role within a club, such as Coach, can carry with it a level of authority, and engender a level of trust, that facilitates the control of a child.

Against this background, a club needs to establish rules covering how adults connected with that club communicate with children connected with that club.

Recommendations:

- Club Officials and Coaches should not communicate with individual children by text or on-line at any time, on any matter, unless there is an immediate risk to the welfare of that child which can be lessened by such contact (RFL comment - *Although with older age groups this may be acceptable as long as it is only group messages about training etc*)
- When communication by phone is needed, where possible Club Officials and Coaches should speak to the parent of a child.

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- Club Officials and Coaches can speak to individual children on mobile phones provided they have prior consent from the child's parents, and from the child if old enough to understand.
- If a club needs to communicate club-related information to children by email (such as training or match details), it should use email groups comprising email addresses given by parents. Such emails should only come from specific designated individuals, and children and their parents should know who these designated individuals are. Lists of the individuals within these groups (names only) should be publicised within the club, and easily available. Individuals must consent before they are included in the lists, and must be removed from the list if they wish to leave.

CONGRESS

Safeguarding was on the agenda at Congress for the second year running. This year Dean Hardman delivered a workshop outlining what Safeguarding is and exploring the benefits clubs gain from having a robust Safeguarding Policy at the club as well as outlining the support that the RFL provide in this respect.

NEW RESOURCES

Please find enclosed two new printed policies, both of which are included in the RFL Safeguarding Policy, but are available to order in a format which can be used as handouts within your club.

Recording Images of Children Policy – this is particularly aimed at being available for parents and others questioning the club's policy.

Dressing Room Policy – you may find it useful to display this outside your dressing room area.

As usual resources can be ordered from the Safeguarding team by contacting Stacey (details below) or submitting a Resources Requisition form.

OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT & OTHER CONTACT DETAILS

Emma Rosewarne emma.rosewarne@rfl.uk.com	Acting Lead Safeguarding Officer Direct Line 0113-237-5013	Mobile 07850 483736
Dean Hardman dean.hardman@rfl.uk.com	Deputy Safeguarding Officer & Lead Safeguarding Education Strategy Direct Line 0113-237-5041	
Stacey Thompson stacey.thompson@rfl.uk.com	CRB Officer Direct Line 0113-237-5036	

Emma Rosewarne's mobile number can be used as an emergency number to ask for support or to make an initial report of an incident at any time. Anybody who has an issue or a question can email the Operations team on the dedicated email address: safeguarding@rfl.uk.com

The NSPCC Child Protection Helpline is 0808 800 5000 - your Local Safeguarding Children Board will also be able to give advice in cases which you think needs statutory agency input.

The RFL would like to thank the CPSU and other sports, particularly the ECB & FA, for sharing their policies and templates and allowing the RFL to adapt materials for its own use.

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