

LEICESTER TIGERS



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

September 2024

FOREWORD

Every one of the young people involved in our Club are important to us and we take our responsibility for their welfare and wellbeing seriously.

Safeguarding children is of paramount importance and involves promoting childrens' welfare in every way. It means working to protect them from abuse, neglect and exploitation, creating a child-centred and multi-agency approach to swiftly and effectively manage any situation that may arise.

This policy has been developed to ensure all those who interact with children and vulnerable young people at Leicester Tigers understand how to identify and report concerns.

Please note that Leicester Tigers Foundation has a separate set of policies.

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1. POLICY

Leicester Tigers is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children; believing all children are entitled to feel safe and protected from any form of abuse, neglect and exploitation, and have the right to take part in sport in a safe and positive environment. For this policy, a child is defined as a person under the age of 18.

We are committed to the following two key safeguarding principles laid out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023):

- 1) Safeguarding is a shared responsibility – for a child to be safe, we must all be fully invested.
- 2) We take a child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children. At Leicester Tigers, we work closely with the RFU Safeguarding Team, alongside the Local Authority and Police to support our children. Leicester Tigers expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

2. SAFE RECRUITMENT

Leicester Tigers follow safe recruitment practice when appointing individuals to work with children, to reduce the risk of abuse. Our People Team ensure that a robust recruitment process is in place including clear job descriptions, well planned interviews, consideration as to an individual's suitability for the role and planning for training and monitoring, in addition to carrying out a DBS check (including a Barred List check) and obtaining and checking references.

We understand that official checks and vetting procedures are on their own, not enough to protect children but they do form a part of our culture that supports and promotes safe practice.

We are also governed by and follow, RFU Regulation 21, which sets out in detail requirements the RFU has for those working with children and DBS checks.

3. SAFEGUARDING LEADS

Club Designated Safeguarding Lead – Sarah Allen, Head of People

Academy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Dave Wilks

Community Designated Safeguarding Lead – Dan Hemingway.

3.1 Working Together

The Club, Academy and Community designated safeguarding leads set the overall approach for safeguarding at Leicester Tigers, under the direction and guidance of the Board, PRL and the RFU.

The responsibility for safeguarding cannot rely on one individual and at Leicester Tigers we believe safeguarding is a collective responsibility and ask that all staff /volunteers have the confidence to "recognise and refer" if they suspect a child is at risk.

All staff/volunteers are expected to be 'alert' to the possibility that a child could be at risk and know how to report a concern.

It is not the responsibility of employees or participants at Leicester Tigers to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is, however, their responsibility to identify poor practice and abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child.

4. PRACTICE GUIDANCE

4.1 Poor Practice

Poor practice arises when the needs of children are not afforded the necessary priority, compromising their wellbeing. Poor practice can easily turn into abuse if it is not dealt with as soon as concerns are raised or reported.

Clubs which allow poor practice to go unchallenged may find that their culture is one which allows abuse to exist and be accepted as the norm.

Examples of poor practice may include shouting, excessive training, creation of intra-club 'elite squads', ridicule of children or children's errors, and ignoring health and safety guidelines.

4.2 Best Practice

The aim of the Club is to create a culture where everyone is confident to raise concerns about safeguarding and to ensure appropriate staff follow best practice guidance to protect children and themselves. We operate on the basis that 'it could happen here'.

Safe environments

A safe environment is one where:

- the possibility of abuse is openly acknowledged
- volunteers and employees are appropriately recruited and informed
- those who report suspicions and concerns are confident that these will be treated seriously and confidentially.

Communication is central to maintaining a safe environment; this includes information given to parents/carers, choosing the correct and appropriate method of providing information to and about the children and listening to children's views on matters which affect them, as well as considering how to communicate in an emergency.

Within our Academy, SPOND is the main communication channel with all children and parents/carers. For specific feedback on performance (e.g. end of season review) parents/carers are invited to join their child, usually via Teams. Our staff avoid direct personal contact with children outside of training/games, unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. risk of harm.

The Academy also has an induction process for new players and their family and an Academy Player Care information booklet.

Within our Community Team, communication is usually via email for camps and telephone with parents/carers should an emergency arise. For residential camps, an app is used where both parents/carers and children can communicate with our staff.

5. TRAINING AND MONITORING

The behaviour and performance of new volunteers and employees is monitored for an initial period to ensure they adhere to best practice and forms part of the club's induction process.

Anyone working with children will undertake RFU 'Introduction to Safeguarding' and where appropriate, RFU 'Play It Safe', which is an introductory level safeguarding course.

Designated Safeguarding Leads also undertake the RFU "In Touch" Workshop, which covers their role and responsibilities.

6. SUPERVISION

Our staff and volunteers know not to work in isolation with children, and while awaiting their DBS disclosure, are supervised by someone with DBS clearance. Only in an exceptional circumstance e.g. significant injury of a child, would this practice change.

Risk assessments are carried out to determine whether it is appropriate for a person to commence working with children prior to receipt of DBS clearance.

Parents/carers are expected to check if they are required to stay for the duration of an activity before leaving.

6.1 Adult: Child Ratios

There should always be at least one DBS checked adult in charge of any group of children. The RFU recommend a minimum ratio of adult to children of:

- 1:10 for children over 8 years old aged at least 9
- 1:8 for children under 8 years old aged 7 and 8
- 1:6 for children under 7 years old

6.2 On Tour/Off Site Events

This policy applies equally on tour, at an off-site event as it does on Leicester Tigers premises.

When on tour if an adult is solely there supporting their own child, they will not need DBS clearance but would if acting in any official capacity with other children. This would apply to those on bedtime or other supervisory duties.

For more detailed guidance please read the Safeguarding Toolkit and Touring with Children (A Safeguarding Guide) www.englandrugby.com/dxdam/47/47825ee0-5ca7-449f-baad-401e2ef78ae7/safeguardingtoolkit.pdf.

7. INAPPROPRIATE RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

All adults should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their dealings with children and young people. Intimate or sexual relationships between those working with children in rugby clubs and a child will be regarded as a grave breach of trust and will be treated very seriously.

No-one in a position of trust should encourage a physical or emotionally dependent relationship to develop between them and a child in their care; this is often referred to as grooming. Adults

must never send children inappropriate or sexually provocative messages or images by text, or other electronic media.

From time-to-time adults may encounter children who display attention-seeking behaviour or profess to be attracted to them. This will be handled sensitively and the member of staff/volunteer will report this to one of our designated safeguarding leads, who will provide advice and guidance, including seeking support from the RFU Safeguarding Team.

7.1 Good Role Models

Those working with children within the Club understand the importance of being a good role model and are required to consistently display high standards of personal behaviour and appearance. They know to refrain from pursuits considered unhealthy in front of children and to address inappropriate behaviour displayed by the children e.g. use of foul or discriminatory language.

All adults should ensure that their relationships with children are appropriate and take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when adults are dealing with adolescent children.

7.2 Breach of Position of Trust

The sexual offences legislation in the UK already provides that any sexual activity between adults and children under 16 is illegal and constitutes abuse.

Any breach, or suspected breach of trust should be reported to one of the Clubs designated safeguarding leads, who will then take further advice from the RFU safeguarding team and other authorities as appropriate.

An adult removed from Regulated Activity for engaging in a sexual relationship with a child will be referred to the Police and DBS who will consider whether to bar that person from working with children in other environments.

7.3 Safeguarding Children with Additional Needs

Additional barriers can exist when detecting the abuse or neglect of children with a disability or additional needs creating additional safeguarding challenges for those involved. Staff and volunteers who work with children requiring additional support are recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility.

8. Contact in Rugby

Contact skills must be taught in a safe, secure manner paying due regard to the physical development of the players involved.

Through RFU training, our coaches are aware that:

- physical handling of a child must only be used for safety reasons or where there is no other way of coaching the technique
- the reasons for physical contact should be explained wherever practicable so that children and their parents/carers are comfortable with this approach

- not to proceed with the action or consider alternatives if the child appears to be apprehensive or reluctant, or if there are other concerns about the child's likely reaction
- the activity should always be conducted in an open environment and in the presence of another adult.

Records of injuries during Academy training and games are captured and monitored by our physio team. All other injuries e.g. a child bumps their head on a summer camp, or a child has unexplained bruising, is recorded in CPOMS and reported to the Club, Academy or Community Designated Safeguarding Lead.

9. GENERAL GUIDANCE

9.1 17-Year-olds playing the adult game

In accordance with RFU Regulation 15, a player can, with the necessary written consent, play in the adult game when they reach their 17th birthday provided:

- they have been assessed as capable of playing with adults;
- the RFU's Playing Adult Rugby Form has been duly completed and signed; and
- the player does not train or play in the front row of the contested scrum. Once a player has reached the age of 18, the player may play in any position.

Regulation 15 gives further information: www.englandrugby.com/governance/rules-and-regulations/regulations

9.2 Changing Rooms and Showers

Adults and children must never use the same changing or washroom facilities at a venue to shower or change at the same time. Where 17-year-old children are playing in the adult game they should be offered separate changing and shower facilities. Adults must only enter children's changing rooms by themselves when absolutely necessary due to poor behaviour, injury or illness, or in an emergency and when waiting for another adult could result in harm to a child.

If children need supervising in changing rooms, or coaches or managers need to carry out a range of tasks in that environment this must involve two individuals cleared to work in Regulated Activity of the same gender as the children.

For mixed gender activities separate changing and washroom facilities should be available.

If the same changing and washroom facilities must be used by adults and children on the same day a clear timetable should be established. No pressure should be placed on children who feel uncomfortable changing or showering with others.

9.3 Transportation

If the Club need to transport children, the following practice will be adhered to:

If hiring a coach/bus from a reputable commercial coach company the Club will ensure that the company provides properly maintained and insured vehicles and properly licensed drivers.

Children must never travel unaccompanied on hired transport. A member of the Club must travel with the children and that adult's contact details made readily available to all nominated parents/carers.

If the Club formally arranges transport e.g. using minibuses or people carriers (as opposed to facilitating travel arrangements between parents/carers) the Club will ensure that:

- drivers have a valid driving licence, and that recruitment procedures, including vetting criteria, have been followed, and appropriate insurance and breakdown cover has been arranged
- the vehicle is suitable for the number of passengers and has operational safety belts and appropriate child car seats
- parents/carers give their consent and have the driver's contact details, with the driver having easy access to parents'/carers' contact details including mobile phone numbers
- no child is left alone in the vehicle with the driver, unless it is the adult's own child. If, in extenuating circumstances, this situation arises the child should sit in the back of the vehicle if possible
- the children involved are happy with the arrangement and adults are alert to any signs of distress.

In the event of a late collection of children, coaches and volunteers should:

- attempt to contact the parents/carers;
- wait with the child, preferably in the company of others;
- remind parents/carers of their responsibility to collect their child promptly.

9.4 Photographic Images/Short Footage

At Leicester Tigers we like to capture imagery and footage to celebrate, share and market what we do. Parents/carers will be given the opportunity to opt out of their child being photographed or filmed and should discuss any concerns with the key person organising the event their child is attending.

10. TYPES OF ABUSE

Abuse is maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse, neglect or exploit a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

10.1 Physical abuse

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

10.2 Emotional abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

10.3 Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

10.4 Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

10.5 Signs of Harm

It is important that in the rugby environment signs of harm are not ignored. These signs may include a child:

- changing their usual routine
- beginning to be disruptive during sessions
- becoming withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- having possessions going missing
- becoming aggressive or unreasonable

- starting to stammer or stopping communicating
- having unexplained cuts or bruises
- starting to bully other children
- being frequently dirty, hungry or inadequately dressed
- displaying sexual behaviour or using sexual language inappropriate for their age
- seeming afraid of parents or carers
- stopping eating
- being frightened to say what's wrong
- not wanting to attend training or Club activities, or even leaving the Club

Abuse should always be taken seriously and reported at the earliest possible opportunity.

10.6 How to react to concerns raised directly by a child

Should a child approach a member of our staff/volunteer, they will remain calm and listen carefully to the child, keeping an open mind. It will be explained to the child that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed as some information might need to be passed on in accordance with this policy.

A written record of the conversation will be taken and should include –

- the date and time
- full names, not initials
- the place of the conversation
- a factual account of what was said
- action taken, by whom and a brief rationale
- signed by the person making the notes (inc. full name and position).

Staff/volunteers will not decide whether abuse has occurred or not.

11. REPORTING PROCEDURES

Everyone in rugby has a responsibility to respond to any concerns that they or others, may have about a child, or the behaviour of an adult. This relates to concerns which arise both within and outside the rugby environment.

Our staff and volunteers understand the importance of raising concerns around poor practice and/or suspicions of harm and use CPOMS to log and track concerns.

11.1 Complaints and Whistleblowing

Raising a concern

If an individual has a safeguarding concern about Leicester Tigers, in the first instance they should submit a written complaint to safeguarding@tigers.co.uk. If the individual feels this is also not appropriate, they should contact the RFU Safeguarding Team via safeguarding@RFU.com or 0208 831 6655.

11.2 Whistleblowing

If an employee has any concern about safeguarding, it should be raised at the earliest opportunity so the matter can be considered without delay and, where necessary, appropriate action taken.

Employees are not required to have 'proof' that malpractice has occurred and are not expected (or encouraged) to gather evidence before raising the matter. It is sufficient to have a reasonable suspicion about the matter of concern, even if it turns out they are mistaken. Only provide factual information to explain the basis of the concern.

Any matter raised under this policy should, where possible, be in writing but concerns may be raised in person.

In the first instance anybody with a concern should raise it with one of the Club's safeguarding leads. If for any reason, the individual feels this is not appropriate they should contact the Club CEO. If the individual feels this is also not appropriate, they should contact the RFU Safeguarding Team via safeguarding@RFU.com or 0208 831 6655.

Whistleblowing concerns may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a partner organisation, a supplier or service provider. In some circumstances the law will protect you if you raise the matter with the third party directly. However, you are encouraged to report such concerns internally within the Club first.

12.USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

Leicester Tigers Safeguarding

Safeguarding@tigers.co.uk

RFU Safeguarding Team

For all new referrals and enquiries:

Safeguarding@rfu.com

For all DBS enquiries:

dbseapp@rfu.com

Referral Management Group

rmg@rfu.com

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000

www.nspcc.org.uk (for adults - 24 hours)

Children Protection in Sport Unit

0116 234 7278

www.thecpsu.org.uk

ChildLine

0800 1111

(for children - 24 hours)