



ESSINGTON RUGBY CLUB: SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Essington Rugby Union Football Club (ERUFC) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people involved in rugby.

The welfare of the child is paramount.

ERUFC believes every child has the right to enjoy rugby in a safe, positive and inclusive environment, free from abuse, neglect, bullying, discrimination and exploitation.

The Club will take all reasonable steps to:

- Protect children from harm.
- Promote good safeguarding practice.
- Recruit suitable volunteers and coaches.
- Respond appropriately to concerns.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers and statutory agencies.
- Create a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

This policy applies to all children and young people under the age of 18 involved in any ERUFC activity.

2A. LEGISLATIVE AND RFU FRAMEWORK

This policy is informed by:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR

- RFU Safeguarding Policy
- RFU Regulation 21 – Safeguarding

ERUFC will operate in accordance with guidance issued by the RFU and Staffordshire Rugby.

2B. RELATED POLICIES

This policy should be read alongside the following ERUFC policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy
- Reporting Safeguarding Concerns Procedure
- Volunteer Recruitment, DBS & Safer Recruitment Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Photography, Video & Social Media Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Respect & Conduct Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Changing Rooms Policy

Together, these documents form ERUFC's safeguarding framework and support the Club's commitment to providing a safe, positive and inclusive environment for all children and young people.

3. SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS

Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO)

Sophie Lockley

Email: safeguarding.erufc@gmail.com

The CSO is responsible for receiving safeguarding concerns and ensuring appropriate action is taken.

Chairman

Gerwyn Jones

Vice Chairman

Phil Breakwell

Club Secretary

Mike Chandler

Junior Chairman

James Hands

Rugby Safe Lead & First Aid Lead

Liv Burrows

Inclusion & Diversity Officer

Phil Breakwell

Mental Health Lead

Phil Breakwell

Mental Health Team

- Cheryl Lennon
 - Jak Somers
 - Charlotte Lyndon
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Additional Safeguarding Contacts

Where individuals do not feel able to raise concerns directly with the Club, advice and support may also be sought from:

- RFU Safeguarding Team
- Staffordshire Rugby Safeguarding Lead
- NSPCC Helpline
- Childline

Children and young people are encouraged to speak to a trusted adult if they are worried about their own safety or the safety of another child.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Committee

The Committee is responsible for:

- Promoting safeguarding throughout the club.
 - Supporting the Club Safeguarding Officer.
 - Ensuring safeguarding remains a standing agenda item.
 - Providing resources to support safeguarding activities.
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Club Safeguarding Officer

The CSO is responsible for:

- Acting as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns.
 - Maintaining safeguarding records.
 - Liaising with Staffordshire Rugby and the RFU.
 - Promoting safeguarding awareness.
 - Supporting coaches and volunteers.
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Coaches and Volunteers

All coaches and volunteers must:

- Put the welfare of children first.
 - Follow club policies.
 - Maintain professional boundaries.
 - Report concerns promptly.
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Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians are expected to:

- Support safeguarding initiatives.
 - Provide accurate information.
 - Raise concerns where necessary.
 - Promote positive behaviour.
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5. SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES

ERUFC will:

- Treat all children fairly and with respect.
- Listen to children and take their concerns seriously.
- Encourage participation and enjoyment.
- Promote equality and inclusion.
- Challenge poor practice.
- Take appropriate action where concerns arise.

ERUFC recognises the importance of listening to children and young people. Children's views, wishes and feelings will be taken seriously and, wherever possible, they will be involved in decisions that affect them. The Club will promote an environment where children feel confident to speak up, raise concerns and seek support when needed.

6. RECOGNISING ABUSE

Abuse can occur anywhere and may be perpetrated by adults or children.

Physical Abuse

Including:

- Hitting
 - Shaking
 - Burning
 - Excessive physical punishment
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Emotional Abuse

Including:

- Bullying
 - Humiliation
 - Threats
 - Intimidation
 - Persistent criticism
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Sexual Abuse

Including:

- Sexual activity involving a child
 - Grooming
 - Sexual exploitation
 - Online abuse
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Neglect

Including:

- Inadequate supervision
 - Failure to meet medical needs
 - Failure to provide appropriate care
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Online Abuse

Including:

- Grooming
 - Cyberbullying
 - Sharing inappropriate content
 - Exploitation through social media
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7. POOR PRACTICE

Poor practice may not meet the threshold of abuse but can place children at risk.

Examples include:

- Favouritism
- Excessive shouting
- Inappropriate language
- Inappropriate use of social media
- Unnecessary physical contact
- Ignoring safeguarding concerns

Poor practice will be addressed by the club and may result in disciplinary action.

8. RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE

If a child discloses information suggesting they are at risk:

DO

- Remain calm.
- Listen carefully.
- Reassure the child they have done the right thing.
- Record what was said.
- Report immediately.

DO NOT

- Promise confidentiality.
- Ask leading questions.
- Investigate yourself.
- Confront alleged perpetrators.

The child's safety must remain the priority.

9. REPORTING PROCEDURES

All safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately.

Non-Emergency Concerns

Report to:

Sophie Lockley

Club Safeguarding Officer

Email:

safeguarding.erufc@gmail.com

The concern will be assessed and, where appropriate, referred to Staffordshire Rugby, the RFU Safeguarding Team or statutory agencies.

Emergency Situations

If a child is at immediate risk of harm:

Call:

999

Then inform the Club Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

10. Complaints and Escalation

ERUFC is committed to ensuring that safeguarding concerns are handled appropriately, fairly and promptly.

Any individual who is dissatisfied with the way a safeguarding concern has been managed may raise the matter with the Club Chairman or another appropriate committee member.

Where appropriate, concerns may also be escalated to Staffordshire Rugby, the RFU Safeguarding Team or relevant statutory agencies.

The Club will not tolerate victimisation or adverse treatment of any person who raises a safeguarding concern in good faith.

11. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS

Any allegation involving:

- Coaches
- Volunteers
- Committee members
- Officials

must be reported immediately to the Club Safeguarding Officer.

Where appropriate the matter may be referred to:

- RFU Safeguarding Team
- Staffordshire Rugby
- Police
- Children's Social Care

The club will not investigate allegations independently where statutory agencies are involved.

12. SAFER RECRUITMENT

ERUFC is committed to safer recruitment. Individuals working with children will be expected to complete safeguarding training appropriate to their role and to refresh that training in accordance with RFU requirements and best practice guidance.

The Club will maintain records of safeguarding training and will support volunteers and coaches in meeting training requirements relevant to their position.

Where appropriate individuals working with children will:

- Complete DBS checks.
- Undertake RFU safeguarding training.
- Receive induction.
- Be supervised appropriately.

The club reserves the right to remove individuals from positions where safeguarding concerns exist.

13. ONLINE SAFETY

Online communication must be:

- Appropriate
- Professional
- Rugby-related

Communication with children should, wherever possible:

- Include parents or guardians.
- Use approved club communication channels.
- Avoid unnecessary one-to-one contact.

The use of social media must comply with the ERUFC Photography & Social Media Policy.

14. CHANGING ROOMS

ERUFC follows RFU guidance regarding changing facilities.

Key principles include:

- Adults and children should not change together.
- Photography is prohibited.
- Appropriate supervision arrangements will be maintained.
- Privacy and dignity must be respected.

Special arrangements will be made where 17-year-olds participate in adult rugby.

15. MIXED-AGE ACTIVITIES

ERUFC recognises that safeguarding considerations arise where adults and under-18s participate within the same rugby environment.

This is particularly relevant to:

- Touch Rugby
- Club events
- Social activities
- Training environments

Appropriate supervision, communication and safeguarding controls will be maintained at all times.

The welfare of under-18 participants will remain the priority.

16. TOURS AND AWAY FIXTURES

Appropriate planning must be undertaken for:

- Away fixtures
- Tournaments
- Festivals
- Residential trips

Risk assessments should consider:

- Supervision ratios
- Transport arrangements
- Emergency procedures
- Medical needs
- Accommodation arrangements

Separate guidance may be issued for specific events.

17. BULLYING

ERUFC has zero tolerance for bullying.

Bullying may be:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Emotional
- Social
- Online

All incidents will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.

18. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

ERUFC is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination.

All children will be treated fairly regardless of:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Socio-economic background

Discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated.

19. WHISTLEBLOWING

All members are encouraged to report concerns about:

- Poor practice
- Unsafe behaviour
- Misconduct
- Safeguarding failures

No individual will be disadvantaged for raising a genuine concern in good faith.

20. RECORD KEEPING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Safeguarding records will:

- Be factual and accurate.
- Be stored securely.
- Be shared only on a need-to-know basis.
- Comply with UK GDPR and Data Protection legislation.

Information may be shared without consent where there is concern that a child may be at risk of harm.

21. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually by:

- Club Safeguarding Officer

- ERUFC Committee

The policy may be reviewed sooner following:

- Changes in legislation
 - Changes in RFU guidance
 - Significant safeguarding incidents
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APPROVAL

Approved by the Committee of Essington Rugby Union Football Club.

Chairman:

Gerwyn Jones

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Club Safeguarding Officer:

Sophie Lockley

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Document Title: Safeguarding Children Policy

Version: 1.0

Policy Owner: Club Safeguarding Officer

Approved By: ERUFC Committee

Effective Date: September 2026

Review Date: Annually

Next Review Due: September 2027