



ESSINGTON RUGBY UNION FOOTBALL CLUB

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY POLICY

"One Club, One Family — Welcoming All to the Home of the Hawk"

1. Policy Statement

Essington Rugby Union Football Club (RUFC) is fully committed to creating an inclusive, safe, and welcoming environment for everyone, regardless of background, ability, or identity. We believe that rugby is a game for all, and our club culture should reflect the community we serve. We operate under a strict zero-tolerance approach to any form of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or unfair treatment.

2. Scope and Core Principles

This policy applies to all aspects of life at Essington RUFC, including players, coaches, match officials, committee members, volunteers, supporters, and visitors. It governs our conduct on the pitch, in the clubhouse, on social media, and during any external club-related events.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the RFU Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy, Essington RUFC ensures that no individual is treated less favourably or marginalised based on any protected characteristic:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

3. Club Values and Standards of Behaviour

At Essington RUFC, our code of conduct is anchored directly to the core values of rugby as defined by the RFU. We use these standards to guide our language and interactions, protecting our club environment from political division, exclusionary rhetoric, or casual hatred.

- **Teamwork:** We support each other, welcome new faces from the local community, and work together to break down barriers to participation.
- **Respect:** We treat everyone with equal dignity. Divisive language, derogatory jokes, or comments that target identity are entirely unacceptable in our club.
- **Enjoyment:** We maintain a safe, family-focused environment where everyone feels comfortable to participate, socialise, and belong.
- **Discipline:** We take personal responsibility for our conduct. Members are expected to hold themselves to high standards and politely challenge inappropriate language or actions using "the nudge" (e.g., *"We don't do that here"*).
- **Sportsmanship:** We champion fairness, respect our opposition, and act as proud ambassadors for Essington RUFC both on and off the field.

4. Active Community Initiatives

Essington RUFC actively works to ensure that grassroots rugby remains accessible and integrated into our local community through targeted support:

- **Socio-Economic Inclusion:** We recognise that financial hardship and unemployment can deeply isolate individuals. To break down these barriers, the club offers free standard memberships to unemployed individuals, ensuring they retain access to a supportive community network.
- **Community Engagement:** The club acts as a local hub by hosting major family-focused community events, such as our annual **Ezz Fest**, designed to bring diverse groups together in a safe, celebratory, and welcoming environment.

5. Reporting and Accountability Procedure

Essington RUFC takes all breaches of this policy seriously. If any member, supporter, or guest witnesses or experiences behaviour or language that falls short of our standards, the following reporting pathways are available:

1. **Internal Resolution:** Incidents should be reported directly to the club's Inclusion & Diversity Officer or any member of the Committee in person. Alternatively, reports can be submitted confidentially via email to essingtonrufc.inclusion@gmail.com.
2. **Investigation:** The club's **Management Team** will review the incident promptly, gather statements, and take appropriate action in accordance with club disciplinary procedures.
3. **External Escalation:** In line with the RFU "Speak Up" Policy, serious or unresolved complaints regarding discrimination can be reported directly to the RFU Discipline team via disciplinerfu@rfu.com.

Policy Owner: Inclusion & Diversity Officer, Essington RUFC

Approved By:

Date of Issue: 23rd June 2026 | **Review Date:** June 2027