

## **Safeguarding – Guide for Match Officials and Coaches of Under 18 Match Officials**

### **The Principle of Safeguarding**

Participating in sports, including rugby, can be a positive and fun experience for children and young people. Scottish Rugby and regional rugby referee societies are committed to ensuring that all children and young people feel safe and are protected from harm.

All adults involved in the coaching or supervision of children and young people have a duty to safeguard welfare. This duty extends to the prevention of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of any young person and is applied regardless of a young person's background or any protected characteristic.

Rugby referee societies and match officials shall follow the advice and guidance set out by Scottish Rugby Union: <https://www.scottishrugby.org/safeguarding/>

### **Definitions**

Child protection relates to all children and young people who are under the age of 18, regardless of their background or role in the game. In this document 'youth' and 'age-grade' shall be construed as referring to children and young people.

### **Protecting Vulnerable Groups Checks**

The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme managed by Disclosure Scotland helps to ensure people who are unsuitable to work with children and protected and vulnerable adults cannot do certain types of work or activities. All coaches of match officials who are under the age of 18 must seek registration with the PVG scheme.

### **SCRUMS**

All match officials, including match official coaches, must be registered on the Scottish Rugby Union's database – SCRUMS.

Details on PVG checks, including the scheme number for an individual will be added to the SCRUMS profile of that person by the Scottish Rugby Union's safeguarding team.

## **Actions of Match Officials of Age-Grade Games and Coaches of Under 18 Match Officials**

### **General**

- Always respect the rights, dignity and worth of every youth match official and players and treat everyone equally, regardless of any protected characteristic.
- Put welfare of Age-Grade Referees and Players first.
- Encourage fair play and ensure safety is paramount in all games.
- Ensure that if concussion or a head injury is suspected, then the player is removed from the field of play – using If In Doubt Sit Them Out.

- Hold up-to-date match official and match official coaching qualifications and ensure age-grade law variations are implemented where appropriate.
- Remain positive when dealing with youth match officials and players and coaches, parents, and spectators.
- Be responsible for monitoring boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with youth match official(s) or player(s); utilising open environments in view of others and avoiding situations where you are constantly alone.

### Specific

- Avoid using the same changing rooms as youth match official(s) or player(s); and if you do enter a changing room ensure you have permission and there is someone else present.
- Avoid showering or changing with a youth match official(s) or player(s).
- Avoid spending excessive time with a youth match official or player(s) away from others.
- Avoid excessive and constant communication with youth match official(s) or player(s) by means including phone calls, video calls, messaging, email or social media. It is acceptable to make administrative communication.
- Permission to communicate with a youth match official must be agreed with the parent/ guardian of that young person.
- Avoid the use of foul or abusive language around children and young people and do not accept the same.
- Avoid taking a youth match official(s) or player(s) to your own home, unless there are exceptional circumstances such as an emergency.
- Avoid driving youth match official(s) or player(s) to games or training unless there are others present.
- Avoid any form of physical punishment or physical force or ridicule or intimidation.
- Avoid exerting undue influence over a participant to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- Avoid engaging in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any kind, and/or making sexually suggestive comments about, or to a youth match official(s) or player(s). This includes innuendo, flirting or inappropriate gestures and terms.
- Administer First Aid - except in an emergency and you feel competent to treat the player. Always seek help from a professional and/or dial 999.
- Avoid undertaking any form of therapy (hypnosis, massage, etc.) for which you are not appointed to or trained for.

### Video Recording

As part of learning and development, games of rugby are regularly recorded. Match officials and match official coaches should not record a youth game unless there is prior agreement by both clubs and confirmation received that parental permission has been given to both clubs for children and young people to be recorded.

If you want your game recorded, then you should proactively explore opportunities for clubs to be responsible for recording games and if possible sharing footage with match officials and match official coaches.

If a match official coach of a youth match official is recording that person, then prior permission should always be received from the parent/ guardian of that person. Footage should only be used for the purpose of reviewing the performance of the match official and for development purposes and should be held on a central, not private, account which is accessible by the PVG coordinator.

### **Reporting Incidents**

If you encounter or witness any inappropriate behaviour or you are made aware of inappropriate behaviour by another adult or a child or young person, you have a duty to report this immediately.

You should complete a reporting a concern from ([Report a Concern - Scottish Rugby](#)) and send it to Scottish Rugby Union safeguarding team ([safeguarding@srugby.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@srugby.org.uk)), the president or secretary of your referee society (unless they are involved) and the Scottish Rugby Referees' Association PVG Coordinator ([machugh\\_cs@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:machugh_cs@hotmail.co.uk)).

If you think a child or young person is in immediate danger, then you should call the Police on 101 or 999.

### **Conclusion**

Everyone in sport and rugby has a responsibility to safeguard children and young adults. This document provides a guide on conduct. If you encounter any situation you feel is inappropriate or if you witness inappropriate behaviour, then you should report this immediately.

### **Useful Links**

[Safeguarding - Scottish Rugby](#)

[UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - UNICEF UK](#)

[RugbyRight \(Online\) – Scottish Rugby](#)

[www.nspcc.org.uk/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/) 0808 800 5000

[www.childline.org.uk/](http://www.childline.org.uk/) 0800 1111

Referee PVG Coordinator – Ronan MacHugh ([machugh\\_cs@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:machugh_cs@hotmail.co.uk)/ 07830195962)

BRRS PVG Coordinator – Steven Turnbull ([steventurnbull1@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:steventurnbull1@hotmail.co.uk) / 07957490005)