



SAFEGUARDING & PROTECTING CHILDREN IN RUGBY LEAGUE Newsletter 6 – November 2007

Report from Congress

Steve Boocock, Unit Director of the CPSU, was the key note speaker at Congress which was held at the George Hotel on 27 October. The following is a synopsis of the message from Steve.

- 1 The principles for safeguarding children & young people in sport
 - Children have the right to have fun and be safe
 - Child protection is about best practice in sport
 - Sport provides easy access to someone who wants to harm children
 - Close proximity of coaches, intense and competitive atmosphere places children and adults in vulnerable situations
 - Sport should play its part in safeguarding and protecting children
- 2 A brief history of the development of child protection in sport since 2000
- 3 Details of the research into child abuse in sport and details of cases which had resulted in a conviction
- 4 The key areas for rugby league
 - Minimise opportunities for inappropriate individuals to enter or operate in sport particularly through the use of CRB checks and recruitment & selection processes
 - Education & training both for coaches and others
 - Systems for reporting & dealing with allegations of child abuse or poor practice particularly the important role played by the CWO
- 5 Praise for the work carried out by volunteers in the game to make the sport a safe and fun place for children but recognition that there is still work to be done.

COURSES

Positive Coaching - Positive Coaching courses will be available in the New Year and places will be available through District Leagues.

Safeguarding & Protecting Children Courses - More and more clubs are now asking for this course to be run at their club house for coaches and volunteers. The RFL continues to subsidise the courses so contact Stacey Thompson if you want to organise a course at your club.

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Equity in Your Coaching – The RFL is happy to put on an Equity in Your Coaching course for clubs in association with SCUUK. As you will be aware Equity in Your Coaching is one of the requirements of Club Mark and is also key to ensuring that all children whatever their backgrounds are protected from abuse and/or poor practice. Please contact Stacey to put your name on a waiting list.

RFL POLICY ON MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Coaches & other volunteers may have to deal with challenging behaviour from the children or young people in their care.

These guidelines aim to encourage good practice, suggest some strategies and sanctions which can be used and identify unacceptable sanctions or interventions which must never be used.

Principles

The guidelines are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All those involved in the sport including children, coaches & volunteers should have clear guidelines about the standard of behaviour which is expected and the processes for dealing with behaviour which is unacceptable
- Children must never be subject to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading
- Some children's behaviour may be caused by medical or psychological conditions. Coaches & volunteers may need additional help including discussing the child's needs with parents and/or carers and possibly from external agencies that already support that child
- Rugby League can be a beneficial experience for all children and children should only be excluded from the sport in exceptional cases

Planning

Coaches should plan their sessions to take into account the needs of all of the group. If there are any children who pose any difficulties strategies to deal with those difficulties should be considered in advance.

Agreeing Acceptable & Unacceptable Behaviour

Coaches, volunteers, parents & children should be involved in developing an agreed statement of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and the sanctions to be applied. This should be done at the start of a season

Managing Challenging Behaviour

The response to challenging behaviour should always be proportionate to the behaviour and should be explained to the child and their parents. The following may be considered:

- Time out - from the training session or individual work.
- Reparation - the act or process of making amends.

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- Restitution - the act of giving something back.
- Behavioural reinforcement - rewards for good behaviour, consequences for negative behaviour.
- De-escalation of the situation - talking through with the child.
- Increased supervision by staff/volunteers.
- Use of individual 'contracts' or agreements for their future or continued participation.
- Sanctions or consequences e.g. missing a training session or match.
- Seeking additional/specialist support through working in partnership with other agencies to ensure a child's needs are met (this requires parental consent unless the child is felt to be 'at risk' or 'in need of protection').
- Temporary or permanent exclusion

The following should never be permitted as a means of managing a child's behaviour:

- Physical punishment or the threat of such.
- Refusal to speak to or interact with the child.
- Being deprived of food, water, access to changing facilities or toilets or other essential facilities.
- Verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation.

Coaches & volunteers should involve parents if sanctions are needed regularly. As a last resort if a child presents a high level of danger to him or her self or other he or she may need to be suspended from the club's activities.

Physical Intervention

Physical intervention should always be avoided unless it is absolutely necessary to prevent a child injuring themselves or others or causing serious damage to property.

Physical contact to prevent or stop something happening should always be conscious decision making rather than a reaction ie coaches should ask themselves if this is the only option to manage the situation.

The following must always be considered:

- Contact should be avoided with buttocks, genitals and breasts. Staff/volunteers should never behave in a way which could be interpreted as sexual.
- Any form of physical intervention should achieve an outcome that is in the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern.
- Staff/ volunteers should consider the circumstances, the risks associated with employing physical intervention compared with the risks of not employing physical intervention.
- The scale and nature of physical intervention must always be proportionate to the behaviour of the young person and the nature of harm/ damage they might cause.
- All forms of physical intervention should employ only a reasonable amount of force -ie the minimum force needed to avert injury to a person or serious damage to property - applied for the shortest period of time.

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- Staff/volunteers should never employ physical interventions which are deemed to present an unreasonable risk to children or staff/volunteers.
- Staff/volunteers shall never use physical intervention as a form of punishment.
- Physical intervention should NOT involve inflicting pain
- Where children are identified as having additional needs or behaviours that are likely to require physical intervention this should be discussed with parents/carers and where necessary it may be necessary to have a suitably trained support work to allow the child to participate safely

Physical intervention should be recorded on an Incident Report Form and handed to the Club Welfare Officer as soon as possible.

Views of the Child

There should always be a debriefing session for coaches, volunteers, parents and children after an incident where physical intervention was used. This should include an opportunity to talk about the incident and about how the child can continue to participate safely.

Club Safeguarding Policy

It is strongly recommended that every Club has its own Club Safeguarding Policy which should be displayed on the Club's notice board. In order to help clubs with this process the RFL has drawn up a template Policy which clubs may wish to adopt. This template in a format which can be used by a club as soon as it has been formally adopted by the Club is attached. Alternatively if your Club wishes to make further amendments to the Policy it is also available from the RFL in Word format so that it can be easily changed. Please email safeguarding@rfl.uk.com to receive a Word version.

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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