

WHITLEY BAY ROCKCLIFF RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Approved: 4 July 2023 | Reviewed and Revised: 15 September 2026 | Next Review Due: September 2027

- 1.** Whitley Bay Rockcliff Rugby Football Club ("the Club") acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children involved in Whitley Bay Rockcliff RFC from harm.
- 2.** Whitley Bay Rockcliff RFC confirms that it adheres to the Rugby Football Union's (RFU) Safeguarding Policy, Guidance and Procedures, and to RFU Regulation 21, and endorses and adopts the Policy Statement contained in those documents and any successor policy.
- 3.** A child is anyone under the age of 18 engaged in any rugby union activity. However, where a 17-year-old player is playing in the adult game it is essential that every reasonable precaution is taken in accordance with RFU Regulation 15 to ensure their safety and wellbeing are protected.
- 4.** The Key Principles of the RFU Safeguarding Policy are that:
 - The welfare of the child is, and must always be, paramount to any other consideration.
 - All participants, regardless of age, gender, ability or disability, race, faith, size, language or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse or harm and should be able to enjoy their rugby in a positive, safe and enjoyable environment.
 - All allegations or suspicions of abuse, neglect, harm, discrimination and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately.
 - Everyone will work in partnership to promote the welfare, health and development of children.
- 5.** Whitley Bay Rockcliff RFC recognises that all children have the right to participate in sport in a safe, positive and enjoyable environment whilst at the same time being protected from abuse, neglect, harm, discrimination and poor practice.
- 6.** Whitley Bay Rockcliff RFC recognises that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone involved at the Club, in whatever capacity.
- 7.** Whitley Bay Rockcliff RFC will implement and comply with the RFU Code of Conduct and the Codes of Conduct for Coaches, Spectators and Officials as appropriate.

Club Safeguarding Officer

- 8.** The Club Safeguarding Officer is:

Deborah Alderson

Telephone: 07854 605842

Email: wbr.debsalderson@gmail.com

The Deputy Club Safeguarding Officer is:

Shaun Malarkey

Telephone: 07939 239250

Email: s.malarkeywbr@gmail.com

The Deputy Club Safeguarding Officer is the second point of contact for safeguarding concerns whenever the Club Safeguarding Officer is unavailable, and is the primary contact for all matters relating to DBS certification. Both the Club Safeguarding Officer and the Deputy Club Safeguarding Officer have completed, or will complete within six months of appointment, the RFU 'In Touch' training course in accordance with RFU Regulation 21.1.5.

9. If you witness, or are aware of, an incident where the welfare of a child has been put at risk, you must inform the Club Safeguarding Officer, or the Deputy Club Safeguarding Officer if the Club Safeguarding Officer is unavailable, without delay, and in any event within 24 hours of becoming aware of the concern. Whoever is informed will then inform the CB Safeguarding Manager and the RFU Safeguarding Team as soon as reasonably practicable.

10. If an incident involves the Club Safeguarding Officer or the Deputy Club Safeguarding Officer, you should inform the Club's Director of Safety, Health and Facilities (Dave Hill; Telephone: 07824 607955; Email: wbr.davehill@gmail.com) without delay, who will in turn inform either the CB Safeguarding Manager or the RFU Safeguarding Team directly.

11. All members of Whitley Bay Rockcliff RFC who work with children in Regulated Activity must undertake an RFU Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check in accordance with RFU Regulation 21. Queries relating to DBS certification should be directed to the Deputy Club Safeguarding Officer.

Safer Recruitment

12. The Club operates a safer recruitment approach for all coaches, volunteers and officials who will work with children, to reduce risk before it arises rather than relying solely on reporting after the event. This includes:

- An application or expression of interest, including basic identity verification, before any unsupervised contact with children;
- An enhanced DBS check processed through the RFU Safeguarding Team, in accordance with RFU Regulation 21.2, completed or in progress before unsupervised activity begins;
- Supervision by a DBS-cleared adult at all times while any DBS application is pending, in line with RFU guidance;
- A basic induction covering this Policy, the Club's Codes of Conduct, and the individual's reporting responsibilities; and
- Completion of RFU online safeguarding awareness training within the same season as the DBS application, in accordance with RFU Regulation 21.2.4.

13. Whitley Bay Rockcliff RFC will ensure that all its members, whether coaches, parents, players or officials, comply with the Best Practice Guidance issued by the RFU. In summary, the following are NOT acceptable and will be treated seriously by the Club and may result in disciplinary action being taken by the Club, the CB or the RFU:

- Working alone with a child.

- Consuming alcohol whilst responsible for children.
- Providing alcohol to children or allowing its supply.
- Smoking or vaping in the presence of children.
- Humiliating children.
- Inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a child.
- Participating in, or allowing, contact or physical games with children outside of coached rugby activity.
- Having an intimate or sexual relationship with any child developed as a result of being in a 'position of trust'.
- Making sexually explicit comments or sharing sexually explicit material.

14. Whitley Bay Rockcliff RFC manages the changing facilities and arranges for them to be supervised by two DBS-checked adults of the appropriate gender for the players using the facilities. The Club ensures that all coaches, parents, officials and spectators are aware that adults must not change at the same time, or using the same facilities, as children.

15. Whitley Bay Rockcliff RFC will ensure that its coaches, team managers and first aiders receive the support and training considered appropriate to their position and role. The Child Protection in Sport Unit's 'Managing Challenging Behaviour' briefing has been adopted and circulated amongst the Club workforce, both voluntary and paid.

RFU Regulation 21 Annual Safeguarding Audit

16. As a Club with an age-grade section and 17-year-olds playing adult rugby, Whitley Bay Rockcliff RFC is required under RFU Regulation 21.1.6 to complete an annual RFU safeguarding audit through the Game Management System (GMS) by the date notified by the RFU each year (24 October for the 2025/26 cycle). Completion of this audit is confirmed annually to the Board by the Club Safeguarding Officer.

Record-Keeping and Confidentiality

17. Any records relating to safeguarding concerns, allegations or DBS matters are stored securely and confidentially by the Club Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Club Safeguarding Officer, with access restricted to those who need it in order to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. Records are retained only for as long as necessary and proportionate, in line with RFU requirements and data protection legislation, and are not shared beyond those with a legitimate safeguarding need to know.

18. Any events held on Whitley Bay Rockcliff RFC premises must comply with this Policy, and, if appropriate, a Safeguarding Plan should be discussed and circulated to those affected. Any tours, overseas or domestic, undertaken by Whitley Bay Rockcliff RFC must comply with the relevant RFU Regulations and Guidance relating to tours.

19. This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Club Safeguarding Officer and reported to the Board, and sooner if there is a change in RFU Regulation 21, the RFU Safeguarding Policy, or relevant legislation.

20. This Policy is supplemented by Addendum A (Photography, Filming and Online Images), appended below, which forms part of this Policy.

Whitley Bay Rockcliff Rugby Football Club

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Additional Information

- RFU Safeguarding Policy, Guidance and Procedures — available via englandrugby.com/governance/safeguarding
- RFU Regulation 21 — Safeguarding — available via englandrugby.com/run/rules-governance/rfu-rules-and-regulations/regulation-21-safeguarding
- Child Protection in Sport Unit 'Managing Challenging Behaviour' briefing — available from the cpsu.org.uk

ADDENDUM A

PHOTOGRAPHY, FILMING AND ONLINE IMAGES

Forms part of the Whitley Bay Rockcliff RFC Safeguarding Children Policy · Revised: 15 September 2026

1. The Club recognises the risks associated with photography, filming and the sharing of images of children online. This Addendum is read alongside, and forms part of, the main Safeguarding Children Policy.

- Parents/guardians record their photography and image permissions for their child via GMS at registration. This permission must be checked, not assumed, before any photograph or film of a child is taken or used. In practice, this does not require a physical check of GMS at the point of taking a photograph — a simple verbal check at the start of a session or match is sufficient (for example, a coach or team manager asking whether anyone present does not have permission for their child to be photographed, so this is known before any images are taken).
- Anyone taking photographs or filming at a Club activity involving children — including parents and spectators — should make themselves known to the coach or team manager present.
- Parents and spectators taking their own photographs or videos at matches or training are reminded to check with the parents/guardians of any other children who may appear in an image before posting it to social media or elsewhere online.
- Where images are used in official Club material, these focus on rugby activity rather than close-up or individually identifiable images of children where avoidable, and children are never identified by full name and photograph together in public-facing material.
- Any concerns about inappropriate photography or filming at Club activities should be reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer in the same way as any other safeguarding concern.

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Addendum A revised 15 September 2026