



WRU SAFEGUARDING KIT BAG

‘Developing safe and inclusive
environments and delivering
great experiences’



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INTRODUCTION

The WRU are committed to supporting Clubs, Hubs and Regions to develop safe and inclusive environments, so that children are appropriately supported in their own development.

We all want children and young people to enjoy taking part in rugby, and Coaches and Volunteers, Club Safeguarding Officers (CSO's) and Parents play a key role by ensuring that children are provided with these opportunities.

They all play a critical role in encouraging and supporting children to participate in Welsh Rugby to ensure that they have fun and enjoy themselves, but also develop themselves as players and people.

The WRU Safeguarding Kit Bag is a guide and reference tool to assist Coaches and Volunteers to develop safe and inclusive environments, and there are other resources available on the Game Locker.

WHOLE ONE CLUB APPROACH

Everyone should have the opportunity to participate or volunteer in Welsh Rugby, and be able to enjoy themselves in a safe and inclusive environment.

The WRU are committed to supporting Clubs, Women and Girls Hubs and Regions, so that they provide a safe and inclusive environment.

There are some key actions that need to be implemented to support this so that Clubs, Hubs and Regions can thrive and provide opportunities for Players, Coaches, Parents and Volunteers to be part of Welsh Rugby. Developing and supporting people is the key to this.

Governance

Clubs, Hubs and Regions are responsible for governance within their organisation. This will include volunteers or staff who provide leadership in terms of how the organisation operate. The Board or Committee are responsible for setting standards and ensuring that the Club, Hub or Region recognise and encourage diversity with a safe and inclusive club environment. This can only be done by a joined up approach across the organisation, so that the Mini and Juniors, Youth and Seniors are all connected through good leadership and communication with a 'Whole One Club Approach'

Coaching

Coaching is a powerful catalyst for promoting positive behaviour within Welsh Rugby. Coaches have a key role to ensure that those who take part in rugby in Wales, have enjoyment and fulfilment from the sport, and enable participants to achieve their aspirations and goals.

Coaches must be competent, qualified for the level that they are coaching at, and vetted through the WRU Safe Recruitment procedures.

Coaches are in a position of trust and should strive to be a positive role model, and create a progressive motivational climate, so that children, have the opportunity to develop as a player, but also as a person, with a range of life skills. When children are able to participate in rugby within a safe environment, they develop these skills alongside their rugby development. It is particularly important that Coaches who are coaching children have the right age appropriate approach to coaching, so that children develop a sense of belonging.

Acquiring these skills will help them to positively contribute to society in the future, develop a love of the sport whilst also improving their physical well-being by engaging in a healthy active lifestyle. They will also have the opportunity to develop their sporting potential.

Working with and for people is central to the effectiveness of a Coach to develop and build positive relationships with others, and this includes players, other coaching and management volunteers or staff, parents and match officials.

Volunteers

There are a host of different roles that volunteers work in within Welsh Rugby. Team Managers and Medical staff or volunteers working with children in regulated activity have a responsibility to be appropriately vetted through the WRU Safe Recruitment process. Medical staff including First Aiders must be qualified, competent and vetted.

Club Safeguarding Officers have a key role to play in making Clubs, Hubs and Regions a safe and inclusive environment and must also be qualified, competent and vetted. The WRU will conduct an induction process and training with the CSO upon being registered.

Club Operations Managers are also key to supporting safe and inclusive environments, and have responsibility to act as the first point of contact with the WRU for any integrity related issues. This includes anti-doping awareness through the STAY ONSIDE education programme, player welfare and promoting the Match Day Protocols through good touchline behaviour.

There are many other volunteers roles in Welsh Rugby where people are not required to be vetted as they are not working in regulated activity.

Match Officials and Coach-Referees

Referees are also required to be competent, qualified and vetted if they are involved in working with children. Clubs are required to support independent Referees who are appointed to matches at their club, and should appoint a Referee Liaison Officer to provide that support for the Referee pre and post-match.

Clubs and Hubs will have Coach-Referees, who will sometimes be performing both roles in Mini and Junior rugby. Clubs and Hubs should ensure that Coach-Referees are also supported by clubs as this is a key role within the Mini and Junior game.

We know that many Coach - Referees are also parents who have volunteered to take on these roles, but is sometimes required to do both. It is extremely important that we respect people who take on this role, as it can be a difficult experience being a Parent, Coach and Referee.

However it can also be very rewarding, and other parents and spectators should respect the hard work and commitment of these volunteers, for their children to have a great rugby experience.

Parents

Parents play a critical role in encouraging and supporting children to participate in Welsh Rugby to ensure that they have fun and enjoy themselves.

Parents can help their children reach their full potential by knowing what their child wants and what motivates them. If parents know this, then they can understand what their child is trying to achieve and what support they need to achieve this.

Parents can provide support, and along with others improve the rugby experience of their child. It is important as a parent to be a positive role model within the rugby environment and ensure that their child has great experiences and is engaged in a safe and inclusive environment.

Standards, Values and Behaviours

We all have a responsibility, both on and off the field, to promote high standards of behaviour in the Game, as well as uphold the values, spirit and image of Welsh rugby.

Our strategic vision is to encourage people to be true to rugby's values and provide role model leadership within the community. Club Officials and Coaches have a key role to play in providing leadership within the game, in shaping safe and inclusive rugby environments.

We all want to ensure we protect our players, officials, volunteers, referees and the image and values of our Game.

We have Codes of Conduct to ensure that people respect the values of the game and are positive role models, particularly those that are involved in coaching or volunteering in regulated activity and working with children.

There are separate Codes of Conduct relating to:

- Age Grade Players
- Senior Players
- Social Media and Communications
- Coaches, Team Managers and Club Officials
- Match Officials
- Referee Advisers
- Spectators

Clubs, Hubs and Regions should promote positive behaviour within the rugby environment. This may be in training, on match days and in and around the clubhouse.

Key Messages

- Promote Good Coaching Practice
- Respect Match Officials
- Know your Responsibilities as a Club Official, Coach or Player
- Spectator behaviour reflects upon YOUR Club – Good or Bad
- Training and Match Day – Create the Right Environment
- Don't be a BYSTANDER be a LEADER

If there are concerns raised regarding behaviour then this should be reported to Club Officials including the Club Operations Manager or Club Safeguarding Officer or directly to the WRU.



Long Term Player Development and Age Appropriate Coaching

Long Term Player Development is a long-term approach to maximising individual potential and involvement in rugby. LTPD models highlight the importance of having coaches working with children and youths, who understand the technical, tactical, physical, mental and lifestyle needs of children and young people as they progress along their rugby journey.

LTPD provides a platform for coaches to encourage and support participants at every level of their involvement in the game, to help them fulfil their potential and to remain involved in sport.

Transformational coaching is a collaborative process where the coach and player work together to identify areas for improvement and develop strategies for positive change. It's important that Coaches understand the importance of age appropriate coaching, so that we recruit and retain more players in our game by having fun, enjoyment and great experiences and are able to not only develop their skills but also a sense of belonging to our clubs, hubs and regions.



Here are some simple tips to help create a positive learning environment when coaching:

- Always have a purpose / objective to your session
- Question your players to check for understanding to ensure they are aware of:
 - What they are doing (the technical detail)
 - How it relates to the principles of play (the tactical detail)
 - What the effect of their actions will be on play
- Allow your players to make mistakes and work out solutions to the problems with your support
- Observe and analyse critically

- Provide high quality positive and constructive individualised feedback against specific key factors
- Correct faults as a result and highlight good practice
- Work on your questioning skills to encourage learning. Rather than tell your players what to do (coach-centred coaching style), use effective questioning skills to encourage your players to reflect on their performance (player-centred coaching style)
- Reward effort (the process of trying hard) as well as achievement (achieving the outcome) as effort is a means to learning and improvement.

Good coaches will -

- Get the best out of ALL players (not just the skilled ones)
- Continually improve ALL players (not just the skilled ones)
- Develop techniques into skills (by placing players into game situations)
- Develop players' game-sense' (their ability to understand the game and the consequence of their actions)
- See what is right and praise it
- See what is wrong, recognise why it is wrong, and be able to correct it.

Each coaching session should follow the following principles and be –

Active

- Use small-sided games / activities that include everyone, are enjoyable, have an element of competition and develop players' skills
- Encourage skill learning for everyone (slow starters may be successful later)
- Keep activity levels high - less talking, more activity

Purposeful

- Only focus on one or two key factors at a time
- Involve players in their own learning through asking questions
- Allow all players to experience every playing position
- Rugby is a late specialisation sport - so, no need to define players into position too early
- Use a range of different coaching styles during sessions
- Review your session through self-reflection, discussion with other coaches and players

Enjoyable

- Plan your sessions so that they are fun, varied, and enjoyable for all
- Consider the long-term effects of your coaching - avoid a 'win at all costs' attitude
- Reward effort as well as achievement - ensure players understand that success comes from working hard to be better players- not just winning
- Promote respect for opponents, match officials and spectators

Safe

- Ensure all activities are safe – all coaches should complete the RugbyReady and concussion management online learning modules available at <https://passport.world.rugby/> as well as be suitably qualified and vetted to coach
- Stop the session immediately if safety is being compromised

- Include warm-up and cool-down every time to ensure the players develop the physical competencies required to play the game
- Group children according to physical development, using height and weight as a yardstick
- Avoid matching children with very different development levels, especially in early development of contact
- Be consistent when dealing with poor behaviour.

Adolescence Transition for Players

Adolescence is an important transition period for young players. The COMPASS model can be one way of looking at your coaching practice and developing it to help get the best out of young players.

The [COMPASS model](#) (Rhind & Jowett, 2010) is an effective framework that can be used to maintain a high quality relationship.

- Conflict management – As a coach do you have strategies in place to deal with conflict? Often conflict can be a challenging topic to deal with and it is important that you remain calm, listen actively, ask the right questions and focus on the facts and evidence that is available.
- Openness – Can you both be honest and open with each other? This will develop a sense of trust and respect.
- Motivation – It is important that you understand what motivates your players. Can you develop a positive learning environment where you are both motivated to achieve your goals?
- Positivity – Playing and Coaching in Rugby Union has its ups and downs, and it is important that you can learn how to both stay positive.
- Advice – As a coach can you provide positive feedback and advice? Can you both be open and honest to each other's feedback? It is important that you listen to each other and acknowledge the different things that you want to be worked on and improved.

Coaching children can be a complex and challenging process for any person. The developmental phase of childhood through to adolescence is a time of important cognitive, emotional and social changes, where adolescents look to establish a sense of independence, self-awareness, competency and identity.

During these important transitional periods players are driven to achieve three basic psychological needs: competence, autonomy and relatedness. They will want to master new skills, make their own decisions and develop new social relationships with people outside their family.

As a coach it is important that you understand these differences so not only will you be able to get the best out of your players, but you will also be helping to build positive psych-sociological skills that can help your athletes to become more resilient.

Encouraging confidence and developing decision making

Throughout adolescence, players will go through an emotional transition period where changes will occur in terms of how athletes view themselves.

An important part of the emotional transition is for adolescents to establish a sense of autonomy or independence. This is a time where adolescents want to be able to make their own decisions.

In rugby, we often see parents or coaches who are still telling children how to perform in games or training. They are telling them where to run, how to pass, when to pass, what to do next and how to play the game.

From a psychological perspective this encourages children to become reliant on their coaches or parents. At training or at games they will look to them for answers and this can lead to a decrease in confidence, belief in their ability and self-esteem.

But what happens if the coach or parent is not there to help them? What happens if they can't make a training session or match?

Children may feel lost and confused, as they will be so used to being told what to do and how to play.

When faced with challenging situations we want young people to be able to problem solve and think for themselves. We want them to feel confident in their decision-making.

When coaching, it is important to have a balance between the amount of feedback you provide athletes. Initially children rely heavily on adult feedback and it is important that you are offering this to players at a young age.

However, as children progress to adolescence they want to be able to make their own choices. You must now adapt your coaching style and become a coach who understands when and how to feedback important information.

Encouraging autonomy in adolescence

There are a number of ways in which you can encourage autonomy in your players as they progress through to adolescence:

- During training sessions provide players with opportunities to make their own decisions. Create scenarios where players can work on their own or together to solve problems.
- Show players that they are capable of doing things without your help. This is about building your players' confidence. Praise their effort and hard work and support their growth and development.
- Create a positive learning environment where players are not afraid to take risks. We want them to be creative and to learn from mistakes and failure. Therefore it is important that you are developing a positive culture where athletes are not afraid to try new things.
- Adapt your coaching style. An authoritative coaching style will go against the young person's needs to seek autonomy and can lead to a decrease in self-esteem.
- Allow the players to make choices in training, this could be the warm-up activity, what aspects of skill development they focus on, roles they have within the session

As children progress through to adolescence they will go through a number of social transitions, which are important for coaches to be aware of. Socially, adolescents will start to want more independence and will go through a period where they have fewer interactions with their parents and family. This is seen as a natural part of puberty.

Throughout this process coaches and clubs can play a very important role. Even though adolescents want to distance themselves from their parents they are still looking to share knowledge and gain wisdom from other adults. This could be considered as an important time for any youth or age grade coach.

Creating an enabling environment for young players

As a coach it is crucial that you create an environment that fits in with the transitions that your athletes will be going through from childhood to adolescence.

Adolescents need a stimulating and challenging environment that is focused around support, autonomy and independence. Players need an environment where there are opportunities to grow, thrive and develop.

As coaches we need to be more aware of these developmental changes so that we can create positive learning outcomes. Consider your role as an Emerging Player Pathway Coach, as well as the psycho-social developments what other transitions are your players going to encounter?

New schools, examinations, change of environment within the talent pathway, first experiences of romantic relationships, moving to university and away from home. These transitions all occur during a critical stage of their development as a player.

Have you considered these in your planning? Spoken to your players and their parents about their exams and the impact of training volume? Have you contemplated the impact on their competition schedule?

These are some questions that should assist you as a coach in supporting your players through their sporting and social journey -

1. How well do I know my players as a person?
2. How am I meeting the needs of my players?
3. What can I do to create a positive motivational climate for my players?
4. What can I do to support the developmental transitions that my athletes are going through?

What can coaches do to build self-confidence?

Understanding self-confidence, and how to build it, is essential for coaches to encourage more people to participate in sport.

For many potential new participants this means that the first step to attending a session is overcoming their lack of self-confidence to do so.

They fear making mistakes, but this is key learning tool, it's how we improve and develop, and having the confidence to manage this as a coach is critical. Everyone is at a different stage in their development and it is important to recognise this.

Coaches need to provide feedback, but if this is not communicated effectively then it can have a detrimental effect on the player, so it is important to be able to have a balanced approach and never provide feedback without including a positive message provide

Developing great relationships and providing positive encouragement is extremely important and Coaches should endeavour to make players feel valued and in a team sport like rugby union, develop a sense of belonging.

It's important to provide tactical and technical feedback, but most importantly it's about having a go and sometimes making mistakes, but also being there to support and encourage them when things go wrong.

Players will develop their own capacity to have a go, and this will develop their confidence within the team but also as an individual. They will overcome their initial fears and feel more confident. However coaches need to constantly support players to continue building their self-confidence and self-belief.

Confidence is not a constant. It fluctuates. It comes and goes. It can be easily gained but also easily lost. We become more confident when we are more familiar and have less fear. Trying a new activity and being successful helps us conquer fear and build confidence. Much of learning to be confident is learning to overcome fear.

Some ideas are simple for building confidence:

- Know something about each participant.
- Know their goals and reasons for attending your session.
- Find out what they believe their barriers (or fears) might be.
- Praise meaningfully.
- Praise achievement of goals.
- Acknowledge effort and commitment.
- Encourage an atmosphere that supports having a go.
- Create small opportunities to be successful, a simple skill or short game.
- Create opportunities for participant to contribute to your session.

It is suggested that confident participants are more likely to continue to return to your sessions. It therefore seems appropriate that coaches should think about what their existing participants' fears may be and how it affects their self-confidence.

From that point, coaches will be better equipped to help participants overcome fear and become more confident.

Regularly planning activities or re-emphasising some coaching activities with a confidence-building focus is an easy way that coaches could enhance their sessions.

It goes without saying that coaches may themselves have to overcome some confidence issues in trying something new within their sessions. They will also have to overcome their fears of failure and getting it wrong.

The Coaches Code of Practice is a valuable resource to support coaches in developing safe and inclusive environments.



Supervision Ratios

Why are Supervision Ratios Important?

- Minimise any risks to participants
- Enhance the benefits children and young people draw from the activity
- Safe Practice - Help deliver the activity safely and appropriately
- Ensure that there is enough adult support should any issues arise
- Reassure Parents

What makes an Individual Suitable to Supervise Children?

- Being competent, qualified and vetted through safe recruitment
- Having insurance appropriate to the activity
- Compliance with the Codes of Conduct
- Understanding their responsibility to safeguard children and young people

What Factors Inform Supervision Levels?

Whatever the recommended ratio of adults to participants, a minimum of two adults should be present. This ensures basic cover if there is an issue that arises that impacts upon the availability of one of the adults during the activity (such as in the event of a child having an accident and requiring the attention of one of the adults)

In the planning of activities there should be a risk assessment completed that specifically informs decision making around appropriate supervision levels.

It is essential that appropriate ratios for supervision are adopted and everyone is clear of their supervisory responsibilities.

Ratios of adults to children should be determined by considering age, the nature of the activity and where it is taking place. For events away from the regular club training venue there should be a higher ratio of adults to children. This ratio should be increased for children under the age of eight. This will minimise any risks to children, enhance the benefits of the activity, reassure parents and guardians, and ensure that staff are appropriately supported.

Toilet Supervision

If the group has both boys and girls there should be at least one male and one female responsible adult.

In larger groups of children, encourage groups to take a comfort break together with one responsible adult, while the other adult(s) supervise the remaining children.

The recommended ratio of adults to children is:

Child's Age	Number of Adults	Number of Children
4 - 8	1	6
9 - 12	1	8
13-18	1	10

At least one of the Coaching and Management Team should be a trained first aider, and a first aid kit should be available. The Team Manager must have access to a mobile phone and contact details for all the children, and parents/ guardians.

There will need to be suitable venues and facilities identified for both fixtures and accommodation.

If any child is hospitalised whilst away on tour or on an overnight stay, or if there are any complaints regarding any issue whilst away, the WRU Safeguarding Team should be notified as soon as possible

Supervising Children and Young People during down time between activities

This can apply to all activities but particularly if young people are staying overnight. Arrangements must be in place to supervise young people during mealtimes and also during any time before they go to bed. This may involve organising activities, or agreeing what they are allowed to do, whilst still knowing where they are and that they are safe. For example if they want to return to their rooms or a communal area.

Mental Health, Wellbeing and Psychological Safety

There is a wide range of mental health and wellbeing problems that can affect children and adults for many different reasons.

In Welsh Rugby we need to recognise that taking part in sport can have both a positive and negative influence on a person's mental health and wellbeing and try to minimise the risks where possible.

Barriers

There are barriers that young people experiencing mental health and wellbeing problems may find hard to overcome when taking part in sport. These include:

- body image issues – young people can feel worried about their physical appearance
- disordered eating or eating disorders– some children or adults experiencing these may be too physically unwell to take part, or performance pressures may be part of their illness
- social isolation or anxiety – people might feel they can't participate alongside other team members, despite wanting to take part in the sport itself
- the side effects of medication can include things like excess sweating, lethargy or weight gain or loss

Unique stressors in sport

There are some stressors that can affect people that are unique to sport. These can be even more pronounced where elite athletes are concerned.

Some of the things that should be taken into consideration are:

- the pressure to perform
- comparisons with peers around ability, appearance or popularity
- maintaining, gaining, losing or 'making' weight to qualify or feel accepted in the sport
- the strain of finding, maintaining or potentially losing sponsorship or contracts
- an increased risk of online or cyber bullying, due to their raised profile
- dealing with media scrutiny and a lack of privacy
- balancing personal and professional commitments
- maintaining healthy relationships with peers
- coping with the transitions between grassroots to elite level sport and into retirement, either planned or unplanned
- the fear of injury and being put out of the game or forced to retire
- managing the emotional highs and lows of sporting careers
- sport being tied strongly with an individual's identity – the risk here becomes apparent when young people leave sport and can feel a loss of this identity

Creating a Safe and Inclusive Environment

Clubs and Women and Girls hubs should always aim to create environments where people feel safe and supported. This could include:

- all staff being trained in basic mental health awareness with an ability to use the correct language and challenge discrimination
- all staff having a general understanding of the pressures that people might face as a result of competitive sport
- a welcoming, inclusive club that treats everyone as an individual with their own needs
- safeguarding leads that feel confident they could identify concerns around mental health and wellbeing
- challenge and address instances of poor negative, aggressive, racist, homophobic, transphobic or sexist bullying behaviour
- staff that ask how young people feel about taking part, listen to their answers and offer help and support if needed
- an organisation that respects its members and their feelings
- a healthy competitiveness that embraces personal development as well as results or wins
- promoting the details of mental health support services and making them available to young people (see the 'Resources' tab)
- staff that know where and how to raise any serious concerns about a person's wellbeing, including internal reporting procedures

Supportive coaching

A coach is likely to have more direct contact with young people than some of the other volunteers or staff involved in the sport or activity.

It's therefore important to make sure that these interactions between the coach and the young person are conducive to their mental health and wellbeing.

Some ways to do this are to:

- seek an understanding of mental health and wellbeing, through training or research
- demonstrate a positive attitude towards talking and openness about issues such as diet, exercise and social interaction
- learn about the effects that mental health and wellbeing problems or treatment can have on a person's willingness or ability to take part
- listen to people about what they feel capable of doing at different stages of their development and make changes where possible
- encourage physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle
- learn about strategies such as resilience and building self-esteem that can help young people with mental health problems to recover

Develop a Culture of Psychological Safety

Safeguarding is all about keeping individuals safe and protected from harm, whether that be physical or emotional. An important part of keeping young people safe in sport involves creating an environment where mental health and wellbeing is prioritised and everyone can thrive.

In recent years, the importance of psychological safety in sport has started to become recognised.

Psychological safety refers to an environment where individuals can take risks, express ideas or concerns, ask questions, be themselves, and acknowledge mistakes – without worrying about any negative consequences. It's a culture that promotes a sense of trust and respect where individuals don't feel judged and can be their authentic self without wearing a mask. This kind of community can help people feel able to put themselves out there and maximise their potential.

Why is Psychological Safety important in Welsh Rugby

Rugby Union can have a fantastic impact on people, but the environment can often be challenging, particularly for talented young players. Players may regularly have to compete against others, endure difficult training regimes, or find themselves under pressure. Sometimes, people may also encounter poor leadership, team hostility, or challenging relationships.

Because of this, people might be more susceptible to mental health challenges like stress and anxiety.

A psychologically safe culture helps to create an environment where young people can thrive, even in a high-pressure environment. This can act as a protective factor for ill mental health, as well as contribute several benefits to wellbeing. For instance, it can:

- improve individual confidence and self-esteem
- reduce stress and burnout
- build a sense of belonging and community support
- promote inclusion and value every voice
- encourage personal growth
- foster a culture where mental health is normalised and help-seeking is encouraged

What's more, as well as positively impacting individual wellbeing, psychological safety can also benefit a team. When athletes in a team feel safe in their sporting environment, research shows there is higher levels of care and respect between teammates, better communication and trust, and an increased ability to make decisions under pressure. These traits build for more resilient, innovative, and adaptable teams.

Can psychological safety lead to better performance?

Although more research is needed, emerging evidence shows a positive relationship between psychological safety and overall performance. Players who feel safe are more likely to take risks, see mistakes as learning opportunities, communicate better with teammates and coaches, and raise concerns if they have any. As a result, overall performance may improve.

How can sports organisations develop a psychologically safe culture?

Creating a psychologically safe culture involves thinking about several factors such as leadership, communication, and team relationships.

How to build a psychologically safe culture:

Psychological safety is when an individual feels able to be their authentic self, speak openly, and take risks, all without worrying about the judgement of others. Developing a culture of psychological safety in sport can help to improve athlete mental health and wellbeing, create more resilient and trusting teams, help athletes to maximise their potential, and encourage people to seek help when they need it. These factors may also improve overall performance.

To build a psychologically safe culture, organisations should:



PROMOTE OPEN COMMUNICATION

- provide athletes with clear expectations and boundaries
- invite participation and shared ideas from athletes
- create a sense of 'we' and 'us' amongst team members

PLACE EMPHASIS ON WELLBEING

- promote support avenues and normalise conversations around mental health
- use respectful and supportive language
- make time to talk to athletes about how they



FOSTER A SENSE OF CAMARADERIE

- discourage blaming each other
- celebrate diversity and empower individuals to be themselves
- build opportunities for candid interactions between teammates and coaches

ADOPT TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

- empower athletes to work towards a team vision and goal
- attend to athletes' unique needs and provide specific learning opportunities
- role model desired



PROMOTE A GROWTH MINDSET

- encourage individuals to take risks within reason
- use mistakes as learning opportunities instead of punishment
- offer technical feedback and positive reinforcement

Safeguarding LGBTQ+ Children and Young People

LGBTQ+ children and young people face the same risks as all children and young people, but they are at greater risk of some types of abuse.

It's essential that sport or activity providers create a supportive and welcoming culture for all children and young people, safe from harm and a place where they can thrive.

Being LGBTQ+ isn't a safeguarding risk, it's how others in our society may behave towards a young person who categorises themselves as LGBTQ+ that may cause risk. Many young people may just want to discuss with you how they feel, so it's important that if they trust you to talk to, you respond in a positive supportive manner.

What does LGBTQ+ mean?

LGBTQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning and more. This term covers a broad range of people who have different lived experiences and may be at different stages in exploring their gender and sexuality and includes people who are asexual or have differences in sex development (sometimes known as intersex).

Awareness and understanding

Communication is key, you shouldn't assume any young person would want to be separated or excluded from activities, have a conversation with them regarding their needs and if any changes or amendments are required. This is good practice for all young people, to make them feel heard and valued within your club or activity.

Many children and young people may have known or questioned their sexuality or gender identity from a young age. A large number don't tell anyone until they are older. This may be because they are scared or worried about others' reactions to their identity or sexuality.

To help facilitate a young person's own understanding and confidence, your sport club or activity should promote the [Childline website](#) and contact details as they can support a young person with [advice about their feelings or sexual identity](#).

The window of time between first questioning their identity and starting to accept themselves (or coming-out) can lead to young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health being impacted. For example, they may experience:

- low self-esteem or possibly depression
- feeling a sense of isolation
- minority stress
- a need to prove themselves in other areas of their lives
- imposter syndrome
- fear of bullying

Your club should strive to create a culture of acceptance, awareness and understanding of different types of sexuality and gender identities.

Key things to remember

- treat everyone with respect and fully implement equal opportunities
- let young people know that they can talk to you and that their privacy will be respected
 - confidentiality practice should reflect that of your safeguarding procedure

- support young people to find the right information and specialist support services
- reinforce an ethos of acceptance and difference
- support all young people within your club or activity, so they feel valued, heard, able to express themselves and progress in their sport
- challenge abusive or harmful behaviours (homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, and any other form of discrimination)
- challenge gender stereotypes and celebrate difference
- promote LGBTQ+ related events and campaigns to demonstrate openly that your club or activity has inclusive values
- do not automatically assume a person's sexual orientation or gender
- promote LGBTQ+ specialist services to everyone in your sport or activity

Volunteer Workforce – Appropriate Conduct

It is important that everyone within the rugby environment is clear about what is considered appropriate conduct when working with children. All staff, members and volunteers must promote good practice and ensure poor practice is challenged. Adhering to the following principles will also help avoid positions where both the responsible adult and the child are vulnerable and create a positive environment within the sport:

- Coaches should be competent, qualified and vetted when working with children and adults
- Always ensure that there is at least one other responsible adult present during training sessions for children
- Treat everyone fairly, and with respect and dignity
- Always put the welfare of the child first before winning or achieving goals
- Maintain appropriate boundaries in relationships with children, and do not engage in sexual relationships with young people where you are in a position of trust
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process
- Make sport fun, enjoyable and promote fair play
- Ensure that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it is provided openly and according to coach development. Care is needed, as it can be difficult to maintain appropriate hand positions when a child is moving. Young people and their parents should always be consulted and their agreement gained
- Ensure parents/carers understand what is expected of them e.g. that they accept responsibility for transporting their child to and from the sport activity, and for bringing and collecting their child on time
- Always ensure parents, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs if supervising young people, particularly in changing areas
- Ensure that at competitions or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms
- Be a positive role model
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of young people, avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- Secure parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given

HOSTING AND TOURING

Managing Overnight Stays and Emergency Planning

Those responsible for organising overnight stays should establish the purpose of the trip, confirm the dates, location, and duration. You should also conduct a risk assessment, and have an emergency contingency plan, and the Team Manager should take responsibility to manage this plan.

The trips can vary from travelling to play local sides to travelling further afield in this country or abroad as part of an organised rugby tour, festival or event. Obviously if they are travelling as part of an organised tour they are likely to be staying overnight.

When taking young people away from the home club, there is a need to consider how we manage our duty of care for the children or young people in the team. The first action should be to appoint a responsible adult with clear roles and responsibilities to manage this process, this is usually the role of the Team Manager.

Initial considerations should include:

- Purpose of the trip.
- Who will be going, children? Staff?
- How much will it cost? How much spending money is required?

If the group i.e. Club, School etc. are going on tour outside Wales then they must seek the permission of the WRU.

The following provides good practice guidance for issues to consider when taking teams on an away fixture for the day or overnight:

- Produce an itinerary giving as much detail as possible
- Establish what insurance cover is required
- Ensure you have sufficient staff to manage and look after the children and young people
- Ensure that if you are supervising children in regulated activity that you are appropriately vetted and DBS checked to the appropriate level (Enhanced)
- Ensure that you consider the catering needs of the children and young people
- Obtain written permission from the parents/guardians or carers for transporting and supervising
- Ensure that there are emergency contact numbers for all the team and staff
- Ensure that the Team Manager is aware of the WRU Safeguarding Policy and guidance on these issues
- Ensure children and staff are briefed on the standards of behaviour and the codes of conduct
- Ensure there is clear lines of communication with all parties involved
- Ensure that there is a club contact available i.e. a member of the club who is not travelling away, who will act as contact point if required. (The CSO or a Club Official may be an appropriate person to fulfil this role)

It is good practice to use an Overnight Stay Checklist to ensure that the various safeguarding and organisational issues are managed effectively (see page)

It is extremely important that the plans are communicated to various people within the club:

Children should be aware of the travel plans, venue and time for collection, time of return and any costs. Children should also have a clear understanding of what standard of behaviour is expected of them. They will also need to know what sports kit or equipment they need to bring.

Parents should be made aware of the above and must have completed a consent form detailing any medical issues that the Team Manager should be aware of. Parents should also have the name and contact details of the Team Manager in the event of an emergency.

Other Coaches, Staff or Volunteers need to be made aware of what their responsibilities are in advance of the trip. If the trip is a long journey, it is important that all have an itinerary.

Accommodation

Whatever the accommodation, the Team Manager should ensure that the children are safe. Discuss your code of conduct and discipline policy with the staff at the accommodation. All children must know which room(s) staff are in and how to contact them if required.

If rooms are equipped with satellite TV, inappropriate programmes may be available. It may be possible to have these programmes disconnected.

Check the accommodation policy for extras on bills, breakages and lost keys.

All accommodation must be clean and with access to sufficient toilet and bathing facilities. It is not acceptable for:

- Children to share a bed
- Male and female children to share a room
- Staff to share a room with children

Checks must be made to ensure that the needs of children with disabilities are met. For wheelchair users, it is important to check access to the building, room and bathroom facilities.

Overnight Stay Checklist

Purpose of the Trip ☐ Competition ☐ Training ☐ Social ☐ Other (specify)	Planning ☐ When ☐ Where ☐ Who (staff / volunteers / participants) ☐ Risk assessment of activity	Communication with parents ☐ Destination, sport and accommodation details (address / telephone) ☐ Name/number of lead club/school link or team manager ☐ Drop off/pick up times ☐ Transport arrangements ☐ Competition details ☐ Kit and equipment list ☐ Emergency procedures, home contact ☐ Consent form ☐ Information re medical conditions (including allergies) or impairments, and medication ☐ Code of conduct ☐ Safeguarding arrangements (reporting concerns, supervision etc.) ☐ Process for parent contacting coach or young person ☐ Process for young person contacting parent	Transport ☐ Drop off/pick up times ☐ Journey times and stopping points ☐ Supervision ☐ Suitability and accessibility ☐ Drivers checked ☐ Insurance
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Transport □ Drop off/pick up times □ Journey times and stopping points □ Supervision □ Suitability and accessibility □ Drivers checked □ Insurance	Accommodation □ Type (hotel, hostel, hosting, camping etc.) □ Pre-event visit and risk assessment made □ Catering, special diets, food allergies □ Suitability for group, including accessibility □ Room lists □ Supervising adults' sleeping arrangements □ Check rooms, meal times, phones, valuables	Preparing Players and Staff □ Expectations on dress and behaviour □ Food and drink □ Currency □ Telephones □ Maps of area □ Check sporting venues □ Arrange group meetings □ Confirm procedures with staff □ Rules (e.g. curfews)	Supervision and staffing □ Ratio of staff to athletes □ Male/female □ Cover for all in-sport and free time periods □ Specialist carers □ Clear responsibilities
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Documentation □ Travel tickets □ Passports, Visas □ Check non EU Nationals □ Accommodation and travel booking documents	Insurance □ Liability □ Accident □ Medical	Emergency procedures □ First Aid □ Specific medical information available □ Access to and administration of medication □ Information on local emergency medical services, hospitals etc. □ Information on medications	Financial - Cash □ For travel □ Payment schedule – deposit, staged payment □ Extra meals, refreshments □ Spending money □ Security □ Collect in money, valuables
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Hosting

Being a host family or being hosted is an integral part of many sports and, if handled appropriately, can add to a child's enjoyment and experience. This is another issue similar to going on tour or having an overnight stay that needs to be planned and managed effectively. We need to ensure that parents, children and hosts are reassured that there is a plan that considers the welfare and needs of all involved.

It is a significant responsibility and it can be a particularly challenging role, but also very rewarding. The host should be provided with as much information about the child staying with them and details of any competitions or events that they may be attending whilst they are there.

There is a need to ensure that hosts consent to being appropriately vetted, and the appropriate procedures are followed and processed as expeditiously as possible. If children are staying with them overnight and are supervised by them they will need to have a valid DBS certificate in line with the definition of 'Regulated Activity'.

When arranging for events/trips abroad, the Club or Governing Body will be dependent on the ability of the host organisation to access vetting services and obtain appropriate references. It is still the responsibility of the trip organiser to provide the hosts with the relevant information on the child and details of what is expected in terms of safeguarding.

If people are hosting, they need to have agreed to a Code of Conduct and provide a safe and supportive environment for the children while they are hosting them. It is important that children have a positive experience when staying away from home and possibly experiencing a different culture.

Children have a responsibility to be respectful to their host families, or when touring as representatives of their club or school. It is important that they report any inappropriate behaviour or concerns to the Team Manager or another member of the Coaching Team.

They should understand their responsibilities and adhere to any guidance and the Codes of Conduct, as they are acting as an ambassador for their sport and on occasions, their country.

There are a number of key principles that need to be considered:

- Ensure that the staff/ coaches etc. are subject to appropriate safe recruitment procedures, including DBS checks, and that the appropriate risk assessments are conducted based on this information
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance in place
- Ensure that all staff and participants are briefed regarding the Codes of Conduct
- Ensure that coaches have the appropriate coaching qualifications and are briefed regarding the Coaches Code of Practice
- Ensure that the coaching and management team are fully aware of their responsibilities to safeguard children

On all occasions, there must always be a minimum of two responsible adults present. This ensures there is supervision in the event of an accident or incident that requires one of the adults to leave the group to accompany a child.

There are some coaches who are not 18 years of age, and although they may be suitably qualified and vetted, they should not be relied upon to have responsibility for safeguarding

issues. They should be allowed to develop their sense of belonging and responsibility rather than depending upon them to take full responsibility for managing a group of children. They can only supplement the adult coaches supervising the activity.

When planning activities, a risk assessment should be conducted which informs decision making about appropriate levels of supervision. Key factors to consider in this assessment:

- Age of children
- Additional supervision/ support needs of some or all participants (i.e. due to disability)
- Competence/ experience of specific activity
- Nature of activity
- Nature of venue

The WRU encourage parents/ guardians/ carers to accompany and support their children in their rugby activities. However we do not recommend that in planning or providing such activities that parents/ guardians/ carers are considered in the ratio calculation of adults to children, unless they are acting in a formal volunteering capacity. In these circumstances the following issues should be considered:

- Ensure that they are subject to appropriate vetting procedures i.e. DBS checks, and that the appropriate risk assessments are conducted based on this information
- Clarity about their role
- Who has overall responsibility for the group
- What is acceptable practice

It is important that there is an adequate number of 'staff to children' ratio on any away trip or tour. To ensure the safety of the team, consideration needs to be given to the following:

- Gender, age ethnicity and ability of the team
- Children with special needs, medical requirements or with disabilities
- The duration of the journey
- The competence and likely behaviour of the children
- The number of team managers, assistants, coaches and specialist staff
- The experience of the staff supervising young people
- The need for enough staff to deal with an emergency (minimum of 2)
- The minimum requirement of a ratio of 1:10 for a team of over 8 year olds
- The need for the ratio to be increased for young players, depending on the above factors and considerations

Communication with Parents

The following information needs to be clarified and communicated to parents and the team when travelling to a fixture for the day:

- Method of transport
- Pick up point(s)
- Time of departure and return
- Destination and venue
- Competition details
- Name and contact details of Team manager and coaches responsible for the teams on the day
- Contact details and any medical requirements for the members of the team
- Kit and equipment list and requirements
- Cost implications i.e. cost of transport, competition fee and pocket money required

Information required from Parents/Guardians/Carers:

- Written consent form accepting the Code of Conduct
- Detailing any specific medical information
- Written consent for emergency medical treatment
- Signed photographic consent form
- Special dietary requirements
- Agreement to pay the fee

CHANGING FACILITIES

If you have decided that children need supervision, staff and volunteers should consider who will carry this out. This task provides access to children in circumstances of increased vulnerability and therefore careful consideration should be given to ensuring that those undertaking this task have been assessed as being suitable to do so.

There are potential risks associated with inadequate adult supervision levels of young children in changing and shower areas.

Consider the following:

- Numbers – organisers are recommended to have more than one adult supervising, as this will ensure cover in the event of an accident or incident occurring or if one supervisor is called away
- Gender – it's considered good practice to ensure that children are supervised by staff or volunteers of the same gender while changing
- Timings – by agreeing a very clear timetable for use of the changing facilities by children, the risks associated to any extended contact between the adults and children are minimised
- Safe Recruitment - carry out safe recruitment practices (see WRU Safeguarding Policy)

Parents, Guardians or Carers Responsibilities

Parents and carers have a responsibility to ensure that their children are appropriately supervised while they are attending a rugby club facility. It is parents' responsibility to judge whether it is safe and appropriate to allow their unaccompanied child to visit a club facility. This judgement should be based on their child's general developmental maturity, their child's awareness of the potential risks, and the level of supervision and care provided within the facility

Parents may wrongly assume that staff will take responsibility for their children within a rugby club facility, or within specific areas such as changing rooms. Rugby Clubs and Hubs should provide a guide to parents, about their expectation in relation to supervision of their children, including the use of changing rooms and shower areas. Parents should clarify these points before they let their children go to a facility.

Parents as Supervisors

Parents are often involved in supervising children during sports activities and outings, and can provide valuable support to organisers and coaches.

Where they are responsible only for their own child or by agreement, their relatives' or friends' children, this constitutes a private arrangement outside the responsibility of the club or hub, or the WRU. However, when parents undertake a formal supervisory role at the request of or with the agreement of the organiser, which includes having responsibility for other people's children, the same steps should be taken, as for staff and volunteers to make sure they are suitable for the role.

Rugby Club or Hub Responsibilities

When children are given access to facilities, the club or hub assume a duty of care for them. The level of responsibility will vary, depending on if the child is

- alone and unsupervised

- with parents
- attending an activity
- attending an activity staffed by the Club or Hub
- attending a club or other activity managed by a third party attending a public session

Clubs and Hubs have a responsibility to put in place appropriate safeguarding arrangements, which include promoting and implementing a policy for admitting unaccompanied children. This information should be provided to parents and other users, informing them about the policy regarding unaccompanied children and any rules about the supervision of young children within the facility.

In practice, while facilities need to be able to establish a minimum age for admission that is practical to operate, identifying a child's age can be difficult. While the facility may set the lower age limit, it is for parents to judge if their child needs to be accompanied. Facilities should have a process for responding to children below this minimum age of 8 who may arrive, or be left, at the facility alone. Refusing entry or asking an unaccompanied child to leave the centre would raise obvious safeguarding concerns.

This is intended as practice guidance to support individuals and organisations to consider issues relevant to their particular context; and to develop and implement policies and procedures that provide a safe and positive environment.

It is recognised that there are a number of risks specific to changing facilities, ranging from health and safety to supervision ratios. The purpose of this guidance is to identify and promote best practice and to minimise these risks.

The presence of unsupervised children, particularly in open changing or shower areas, can cause concern for volunteer staff and members of the public. Changing room facilities at rugby clubs or leisure facilities need to be properly supervised. The use of changing facilities can be difficult to regulate where training venues are open to the public and may be mixed gender.

Supervision in the changing facility may also be necessary when children are too young to be left alone or change themselves. Organisers of groups of children under eight years should make arrangements for their supervision while changing before and after the activity.

Although most children of school age (four years old) may be capable of changing their clothes, many sports and leisure facilities have established guidelines that any child below the age of eight years must be accompanied. The group includes disabled children who require additional support and assistance with changing (note this should be undertaken with prior agreement from their parent or professional carer)

If you have decided that the children and young people need supervision, staff/volunteers should consider who will carry this out. This task provides access to children in circumstances of increased vulnerability and therefore careful consideration should be given to ensure that those undertaking this task have been assessed as being suitable to do so.

It is important to conduct the appropriate vetting checks i.e. DBS checks, and ensure that staff are aware of the guidance in this policy.

The WRU recognise that Youth Rugby is played within the age range of 16-18 years, so there will be young adults sharing a changing room with children. The players are part of the same peer group and those over 18 years of age are not in a position of trust, as they are part of the same team. In these circumstances it is accepted that 16 and 17 year olds will be sharing a

changing room with an 18 year old, and this should be managed appropriately by the Team Manager or Coach.

All WRU clubs should develop a policy that fits with the specific circumstances in which they operate. The following principles should be adopted:

- Where a club is fully responsible for changing facilities, adults should not be permitted to get changed in these facilities at the same time as children
- Parents should only be in the changing room to assist their child if the age group using the facilities are under 8 years old. Additional arrangements may be required if there are young people with disabilities in the group
- There must be separate changing facilities or changing times for males and females
- No-one of the opposite sex should enter changing rooms whilst the occupants are changing. However it is permissible to enter the changing rooms if the occupants are fully clothed i.e. their usual clothing or rugby kit
- The use of photographic devices, including mobile phone cameras must not be permitted in changing facilities
- Children and Adults at Risk should be aware that incidents in the changing facilities should be reported without delay
- Clubs that are unable to provide safe changing room facilities must ensure participants arrive wearing their training clothes
- If children or adults at risk need supervising in changing rooms, or coaches or managers need to carry out a range of tasks in that environment this must involve two adults of the same gender as the children or adult. For mixed gender activities separate facilities should be available.
- If the same facilities are used by adults (in senior rugby) and children or adults at risk on the same day a clear timetable should be established.
- Children should not be pressurised into showering with others if they feel uncomfortable doing so. If this is the case they should be allowed to shower and change at home.
- Where a disability requires significant support from a parent/ guardian or carer, the person concerned and their parent/ guardian or carer should decide how they should be assisted to change or shower, and prior consent should be agreed

TRANSPORT

The Team Manager is responsible for the team and staff at all times including maintaining good discipline, and is also responsible for the logistical issues that need to be addressed in terms of transport and safety, particularly if the club are providing their own driver(s).

In addition to the mini-bus/car insurance, the Team Manager also needs to ensure that the Club's general insurance covers travel to away events. There is also a need to ensure that the vehicle is covered for breakdown and recovery.

The following issues need to be considered:

- Ensure the competence of the driver, and check that he/she has an appropriate and valid driving licence
- Allow an appropriate length of time to complete the journey
- Number of driving hours for the journey and length of the driver's day including non-driving hours
- Drivers need to take breaks and be aware of emergency procedures
- Consider the impact of traffic and weather conditions
- If using a mini-bus ensure that all seats are forward facing and they all have seat belts fitted if carrying children. Is the driver experienced in driving a mini-bus?
- Ensure all occupants and children wear seat belts
- Check there is appropriate insurance cover
- Clarify supervision requirements with the Coaching and Management Team. The driver should not be considered as a supervisor during the journey
- Ensure that the vehicle is road worthy
- Ensure that the driver has undertaken an AccessNI check
- Ensure the appropriate booster seats or specialised equipment are provided where required
- All team members and staff are familiar with emergency procedures within the vehicle i.e. emergency door

Transport Supervision

The recommended ratio of adults to children is:

- Children under 8 years old - One adult to eight participants (with a minimum of two adults)
- Children over 8 years old - One adult to ten participants (with a minimum of two adults)

However, the driver cannot supervise children whilst driving, so you would need to increase the numbers in this case.

Private Car Usage for Transport

Clubs usually require private cars to be used to transport young people from within the club.

If this is the only method of available, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

- Drivers must register their vehicle with the Club

- Drivers must ensure the safety of all passengers
- Drivers must ensure that their vehicle is road worthy and that they have a valid licence and insurance cover
- Drivers must only use vehicles with seat belts and ensure that their passengers are wearing these whilst in transit
- Parents/guardians/carers must give their written permission if their child/children is to be transported in another adult's car
- Clear information on expected departure/arrival time needs to be communicated to the relevant people i.e. parents/guardians/carers
- Drivers should not be alone with a young person in the car at any time. If an emergency situation arises, drivers need to ensure that the young person is in the back of the car
- If the driver regularly provides transport for children i.e. on a weekly basis or four times a month, then they may need to be DBS checked (seek advice from the WRU Safeguarding Team if you're unsure)

Late Collection of Children

Late collection of children by parents/carers can be challenging for sports officials/volunteers/Clubs to manage. One way of addressing this issue is to stress the need for parents/carers to ensure they arrive on time at the end of a session.

However, it is appreciated that there are some circumstances beyond the control of the parent/carer that may make it impossible to collect their child on time. Whilst it is not the responsibility of coaches and officials to transport children home on behalf of parents/carers who have been delayed, clubs should adopt the following measures to ensure children are safeguarded:

- Ask parents to provide an emergency contact name and number
- Provide parents/carers with a contact number for the club and an instruction to call if there is any likelihood of late collection
- Attempt to contact the child's parent/carer or, if necessary, the emergency contact
- Ensure that two adults remain with the child at the facility until the parent/carer arrives
- If appropriate, remind parents/carers of the policy relating to late collection
- The child should not be sent home with another person without permission from a parent/carer.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Photography and the Use of Images

The WRU believes it is important that parents/guardians/carers are able to celebrate the achievements of their children through taking photographs or filming. In addition The WRU recognises that promoting images of the sport will help encourage increased participation, but recommends that appropriate and proportionate safeguards should be in place to ensure a safe sporting environment for children and young people.

There may be children who for legal or child protection reasons cannot be photographed. The reasons behind this decision may be confidential and are often sensitive matters, so it is important that this confidentiality is respected. However it is also important that Coaches and Team Managers are aware that the child cannot be photographed.

To ensure that this is managed effectively, the Team Manager or Coach should consider notifying the opposition Coach or Team Manager of this prior to the game taking place without disclosing the identity of the child. Therefore in some games there may be a photograph ban, but this will generally not be the case.

It is important that this is dealt with as confidentially as possible but clearly the information has to be shared to prevent any legal or child protection breach of policy.

There are risks to children associated with the use of photographs on sports websites and other publications, and this also needs to be monitored and managed effectively.

Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children when they are accompanied with personal information. This information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to 'groom' the child. Information placed on social media has also been used by estranged parents (e.g. in adoption or domestic violence circumstances) to identify, trace and cause significant difficulties for children. The content of photographs can itself be inappropriate, or be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of inappropriate or adapted material finding its way onto sites showing child abuse images, and of inappropriate images being shared between groups of offenders.

The WRU does not advocate the banning of photography but recognises the importance of putting in place appropriate and proportionate safeguards to ensure a safe sporting environment for children and young people and allow children (and their parents/guardians on their behalf) the right to decide whether their photograph is taken, and how the images may be used.

Clubs need to develop a policy in relation to the use of images of young athletes on their websites and in other publications. The organisation will need to make decisions about the type of images they consider suitable and that appropriately represent the club or sport, without putting children at increased risk. They will want to ensure that parents, young people and others understand and support their policy. When assessing the potential risks in the use of images of athletes, the most important factor is the potential for inappropriate use of images of children.

There is a need to ensure that parents or guardians have consented to photographs being taken of their child. It is good practice to obtain written consent from the relevant parties when

players are registered at the beginning of each season so that the Coaching and Management Team are fully aware if there are any issues that will need to be managed.

The following principles should be adopted as best practice by clubs:

- The interests and welfare of children taking part in sporting activities is paramount
- Children and their parents/carers have a right to decide whether their images are taken, and how these may be used
- Children and their parents/carers must provide written consent for their images to be taken and used
- Consent is only meaningful when the club or organisation ensures that children and their parents/carers understand the nature of potential risks associated with the intended type, use and distribution of the images

There are a number of safeguarding measures that can be adopted as part of the club policy:

- Where possible do not include the name of a child whose image is being used
- If naming a child or group of children in an image, only use their first names, as this will reduce the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the sport
- Avoid the inclusion of other detailed information about individual children
- Ask for the child's permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport
- Ask for parental permission to use an image of a young person. This ensures that parents are aware of where and how the image of their child will be used to represent the club, event or sport (e.g. on a website, or on social media)
- Ensure parents understand the nature of the potential risks associated with the intended use of the image(s)
- Be clear about how and for how long images will be securely stored (including how access to the images, associated consents and other information will be controlled)
- Only use images of children in suitable dress/kit (including required or recommended safety wear such as shin pads, gum shields and so on) to reduce the risk of inappropriate use
- Images should positively reflect the child's involvement in the activity (e.g. showing smiling participants rather than anxious or unhappy ones) and promote the best aspects of the sport
- Consider what is appropriate in terms of location i.e. photographs shouldn't be taken in changing rooms or in toilet areas
- Create and publicise a procedure for reporting the abuse of images or the use of inappropriate images, to reduce the risks to children

Photographs will sometimes be uploaded onto Club websites or other social media such as Twitter or Facebook. Please see the section on Social Media Policy in relation to the responsible management of photographs and videos.



Filming as a Coaching Aid

The WRU advises that coaches using filming as a legitimate coaching aid should make parents/carers and players aware that this will be part of the coaching programme. Parental consent must be provided, as outlined above.

If games and activities are being filmed then there should be a notice provided, so that people are aware that they may be filmed.

Notices should state that filming will be taking place for a legitimate coaching reason, and if people do not consent to being filmed then this should be taken into consideration.

Social Media

This document provides guidance on the procedures that will support and underpin the use of social networking and other online services within your club or organisation.

The Welsh Rugby Union are committed to promoting safe and responsible use of social media.

There are huge benefits in using social media in a sporting context, and sites such as Facebook are used regularly by rugby clubs and organisations to communicate with players and participants. There are many forms of social media that are used by children and young people involved in rugby whether within a rugby environment or not.

It is important that all staff, volunteers, coaches, officials, referees, or senior management committee members, or anyone working on behalf of the organisation are aware of the club policy and agree to the following terms:

- To protect all children and young people attending the rugby club/organisation and who make use of technology (such as mobiles phones, games consoles/hand held devices and the internet) whilst they are within the care of the club/organisation.
- To provide staff and volunteers with policy and procedure information regarding online safety.
- To ensure the club/organisation is operating in line with their values and within the law regarding how the organisation uses information technology.

The following issues should be considered, and may be part of the club policy in terms of social media:

- Understand the safety aspects including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour when using digital technology such as social networking sites (e.g. Twitter and Facebook), mobile phones, game consoles and the internet
- When engaging with digital technology/social networking companies it is important to ensure that they adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines
- Review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated, reporting online concerns about possible abuse or other breaches of terms
- Decide how your club website will be managed within your club/organisation
- Ensure the person managing the organisation's website understands his/her responsibilities in terms of safeguarding
- Ensure the involvement of the Club Safeguarding Officer in monitoring the website

- Ensure any interactive content is moderated e.g. club social network page/discussion forums
- Ensure that adequate privacy settings are in place either restricting or allowing access to photos, personal information, comments about others, friends and followers i.e. Facebook closed groups
- Ensure that staff and volunteers, including coaches and athletes, are aware of the need to protect their privacy online. Staff and volunteers should be encouraged by the club/organisation to carefully consider who they give access to their personal information online. All staff and volunteers should ensure that there is a clear differentiation between their personal and professional profiles
- Promote safe and responsible use
- Avoid taking or publishing personal details of children and young people
- When uploading content – ‘Think before you Post’

Social Media Codes of Conduct

The WRU have a Social Media and Communications Code of Conduct which outlines the expectations and standards that are required.

These are included in the [WRU Disciplinary Regulations](#) that are available on the WRU website

Breaches of the Codes of Conduct may be investigated as misconduct or safeguarding matters. Complaints of threatening behaviour, bullying or harassment conducted online may lead to the matter being investigated by the WRU or by the Police.

Text Messaging and E-mail

Rugby clubs and other sports organisations are keen to utilise text messaging and e-mail systems to help improve communication and increase participation. Children, young people and adults at risk are able to contact Team Managers and Coaches regarding arrangements for training and playing.

The significant benefit of these forms of communication is that it is not only cheap, but it is one of the most direct forms of communication as most people have mobile phones, or access to the internet.

It is therefore hoped that the responsible use of text messages/ e-mails will help to:

- Improve communication
- Increase publicity about events, training and games
- Attract more people into the game
- Improve retention rates

For children, young people, and adults at risk, the safeguarding risks associated with texting/e-mail include:

- Inappropriate access to, use or sharing of personal details (e.g. names, mobile phone numbers)
- Unwanted contact from others
- Text bullying by peers
- Online bullying by peers (see cyberbullying below)
- Being sent offensive or otherwise inappropriate materials
- Grooming for sexual abuse

- Posting inappropriate photographs as this can lead to exploitation
- Direct contact and actual abuse

For adults involved risks include:

- Misinterpretation of their communication with young people
- Potential investigation (internal or by statutory agencies)
- Potential disciplinary action

If the communication is between adults and children, the people who should be in contact with children about playing and training arrangements etc., should be the Team Manager or Coach. Both of these roles require Safe Recruitment and enhanced DBS check as part of the volunteer recruitment vetting process.

All text messages and e-mails must be sent via a group message i.e. the same standard message being sent to every member of the group. The text messaging or e-mail system should never be used to send messages on an individual basis (i.e. to just one person).

Text messages and e-mails which are sent must never contain any offensive, abusive or inappropriate language.

It is good practice to send the message/ e-mail to a moderator, which may be the Club Safeguarding Officer, another member of the Coaching and Management Team or a Parent Helper. Hence, it is essential that the moderator's mobile phone number is included in every 'communication group' that is set up, and in every group message that is sent out. The moderator's role will be to ensure that the system is being used appropriately, and to respond to any concerns arising.

The content should relate solely to sports activity. Messages should reflect the professional relationship between coach and athlete, and the coach's position of trust. Text messages, e-mails and mobile phones must never be used for any other reason or in any other way.

Consideration will be given to initiating the organisation's child protection and disciplinary procedures should any breaches of this protocol arise, including consultation with or referral to statutory agencies if indications of illegal activity (e.g. grooming for abuse) come to light.

Consent must be obtained prior to sending the young people text messages or e-mails. For young people aged 15 or under, specific consent must be obtained from their parents.

Parents of children must be offered the option to be copied into any texts or e-mails that their child is sent. Although parental consent is not required for young people aged 16 and over, written consent must be obtained from these individuals themselves. Please note that for the over 16's (who are children as defined by the Children Act 1989) it is still recommended that their parents are also informed of the intention to send their children text messages or e-mails, the reason for this, and that the organisation has taken steps to ensure their child's safety in this respect.

Online Practical Guidance

- Adults in a position of trust i.e. Coach, Team Manager etc. who have their own personal Facebook account, should not add children as friends
- If you do have children as friends on your Facebook account then you may be putting yourself at risk
- You should set your privacy settings so that people cannot see your personal account
- If your age group, club or organisation are using Facebook as a means of communication ensure that there is a closed group, which is managed by a moderator who has been appropriately vetted
- The moderator or CSO should monitor the website and any postings for inappropriate comments or misuse
- Social media should only be used as a communication tool for rugby purposes, if there are specific messages that need to be given then this can be done via the parents
- Inappropriate posts or comments should be reported to the CSO
- Act responsibly online and think before you post, avoid using social media when you're tired, emotional or have been drinking alcohol
- Ensure that the personal details of children are not included on social media or club websites, particularly if there is an accompanying photograph, as this may make them vulnerable and it should be avoided
- Block users who harass, cause offence or bully others
- Don't link to other sites that may post offensive or inappropriate comments

PHYSICAL CONTACT AND MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Physical Contact

The use of physical contact in rugby is important to support the development of skills and techniques, to treat injury or prevent an injury or accident from occurring. Physical contact during participation in rugby should always be intended to meet the child or the adult's needs.

It is important to be open and transparent about physical contact as it is possible that legitimate contact between an adult and a child or adult at risk may be misconstrued or misunderstood, by them or by observers.

The following guidance should be applied in respect of any physical contact with children or adults at risk:

- Ensure, in situations where physical contact is necessary to assist with learning, the person explains to the child or adult, the nature and reason for the physical contact, and unless the contact arises in an emergency and to prevent harm, ask the child or adult for permission
- Avoid over handling when assisting a child or adult at risk
- Ensure any physical contact takes place in an open or public environment and does not take place in secret or out of sight of others
- Avoid any unjustified or unnecessary physical contact
- Include guidance on physical contact as part of an induction process or pack for new participants, and ensure that parents, guardians or carers are briefed appropriately
- Ensure children or adults with disabilities who need to be lifted or manually supported, are treated with dignity and respect. Relevant health and safety guidelines must be followed to ensure the safety of the individual and those assisting. It is recommended that those assisting receive appropriate training
- Ensure that any sport science or medical practices or other roles where physical contact is common place and/or a requirement of the role is only carried out by trained or qualified practitioners
- Contact should not involve touching genital areas, buttocks, breasts or any other part of the body that might cause a person distress or embarrassment
- Any form of physical punishment of children or adults at risk is unlawful, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of physical intervention to prevent a person from harming themselves or others or damaging property
- Encourage children and adults to voice concerns in the event that any physical contact makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened

There may be occasions where children are distressed and in need of physical comfort and reassurance. A coach or other volunteer may also want to mark a success or achievement with a hug or other gesture.

Individuals should use their discretion in such cases, being led by the needs of the subject person and ensure that what is (and what is seen by others present) normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same child over a period of time.

Managing Challenging Behaviour

Staff and volunteers who are involved in coaching activities with children or adults may, on occasions, be required to deal with challenging behaviour.

The WRU are committed to developing good practice and to encourage a proactive response to supporting people to manage their own behaviour.

They suggest some strategies and sanctions which can be used and also identify unacceptable sanctions or interventions which must never be used by staff or volunteers.

The WRU strategy on dealing with the issue of challenging behaviour is based upon the following principles:

- The welfare of the child or adult is the paramount consideration
- All those involved in activities should understand and be clear on the standards of conduct, and the process for responding to behaviour that is deemed unacceptable
- Children or adults at risk must never be subject to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading
- Some people exhibit challenging behaviour as a result of specific circumstances, i.e. a medical or psychological condition, and coaches may therefore require specific or additional guidance. These and any other specific needs the person may have should be discussed with parents, guardians or carers and the person involved in planning for the activity, to ensure that an appropriate approach is agreed and, where necessary, additional support provided
- Sport can make a significant contribution to improving the life experience and provide positive outcomes for everyone. Every child or adult at risk should be supported and encouraged to participate and, only in exceptional circumstances where there is a safety issue, that cannot be appropriately managed, should a person be excluded from club activities

Good coaching practice requires effective planning around the needs of the group, but also needs to take into consideration the needs of each individual athlete within that group. When planning any sessions, coaches should consider whether there has been any previous difficulties for any members of the group, in relation to the tasks involved, the other participants or the environment.

Where staff/volunteers identify potential risks, strategies to manage those risks should be agreed in advance of the session, event or activity. The planning should also identify the appropriate number of staff or volunteers required to safely manage and support the session including being able to adequately respond to any challenging behaviour and to safeguard other members of the group and the staff/ volunteers involved.

When people are identified as having additional needs or behaviours that are likely to require additional supervision, specialist expertise or support, this should be discussed with Parents, guardians or carers, and the person involved if appropriate. It's important that a person centred approach is taken and that individual needs are catered for.

The club should seek to work in partnership with parents, guardians and carers, and where necessary external agencies, to ensure that a child or adult at risk can be supported to participate safely.

Agreeing Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours

Staff, volunteers, children, young people, adults at risk and parents, guardians and carers should all be involved in developing an agreed statement of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (Code of Conduct) and the range of sanctions which may be applied in response to unacceptable behaviour. This can be done at the start of the season, in advance of a trip away from home or as part of a club induction process.

Issues of behaviour and control should regularly be discussed with the appropriate people in the context of rights and responsibilities. When people are specifically asked as a group, to draw up a code of conduct that will govern their participation in club activities, experience indicates that they tend to arrive at a very sensible and working set of 'rules' with greater 'buy-in' from participants.

Response to Managing Challenging Behaviour

When responding to challenging behaviour the response should always be proportionate to the actions, be imposed as soon as is practicable and be fully explained to the child or adult at risk, and their parents, guardians and carers. In dealing with people who display negative or challenging behaviours, staff and volunteers might consider the following options:

- Time out - from the activity, group or individual work
- Reparation - the act or process of making amends
- Restitution - the act of giving something back
- Behavioural reinforcement - rewards for good behaviour, consequences for negative behaviour
- De-escalation of the situation - talking it through with the person concerned
- Increased supervision by staff/volunteers
- Use of individual 'contracts' or agreements for their future or continued participation
- Sanctions or consequences e.g. training/ playing / missing an outing
- Seeking additional/specialist support through working in partnership with other agencies to ensure that a person's needs are met appropriately
- Temporary or permanent exclusion. Every appropriate option should be explored before anyone is permanently excluded
- Particular care should be taken to manage any issues as there may be complex needs

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

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

Staff and volunteers should review the needs of any person for whom sanctions are frequently necessary. This review should involve all of the relevant people involved, and in some cases others involved in supporting or providing services for the person and his/her family. This should ensure that an informed decision is made about the person's future or continued participation. As a last resort, if a person continues to present a high level of risk or danger to him or herself, or others, they may have to be excluded or suspended from any activities.

Physical Intervention

The use of physical intervention should always be avoided unless it is absolutely necessary to prevent a child or adult at risk injuring themselves or others, or causing serious damage to property. All form of physical intervention should form part of a broader approach to the management of challenging behaviour.

Physical contact to prevent something happening should always be the result of conscious decision making and not a reaction. Before physically intervening, the member of staff or volunteer should ask themselves, 'Is this the only option in order to manage the situation and ensure safety?'

It is good practice to ensure that if you have to physically intervene in a situation with a child, young person, or adult at risk, it is in the least restrictive way necessary to prevent them from getting hurt, and used only after all other strategies have been exhausted.

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 person 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 person and the nature of harm/ damage they might cause
- All forms of physical intervention should employ only a reasonable amount of force i.e. the minimum force needed to avert injury to a person or serious damage to property applied for the shortest period of time
- Staff/volunteers should never employ physical interventions which are deemed to present an unreasonable risk to people or staff/volunteers
- Staff/volunteers shall never use physical intervention as a form of punishment
- Physical intervention should NOT involve inflicting pain
- Where people are identified as having additional needs or behaviours that are likely to require physical intervention this should be discussed with parents, guardians or carers and where necessary the club will seek advice from or to work in partnership with external agencies to ensure that the person can be supported to participate safely. This may include asking for the provision of a suitably trained support worker/volunteer or accessing staff/volunteer training in physical intervention
- Any physical intervention used should be recorded as soon as possible after the incident by the staff/volunteers involved and passed to the CSO

Child Centred Approach and the Views of the Child

Research indicates that the use of physical intervention provokes strong feelings in children and young people. Children may be left physically or emotionally hurt as a result of this, and as outlined it should always be avoided unless necessary to prevent a child from harm.

Children who haven't been directly involved in the situation may be fearful that it will happen to them in future or have been upset by seeing what has happened to others.

If there is an incident where physical intervention has been used, there should be a de-brief conducted for staff/volunteers, the child and the parents. One of the primary considerations here is to ensure that any welfare or medical issues are addressed as a priority. The physical and emotional well-being of those involved should be addressed and ongoing support offered where necessary. Staff/volunteers, children and parents should be given an opportunity to talk about what happened in a calm and safe environment.

There should also be a discussion with the child and parents about the child's needs and continued safe participation in the group or activity. It is important that staff and volunteers are made aware of and understand the organisation or club guidance about managing challenging behaviour to ensure that they are aware of ways in which they may need to intervene and are clear about the practice guidance in this area.

RESPONDING TO MEDICAL ISSUES

Sports organisations have a duty to be inclusive and to provide opportunities for children and young people of all abilities, regardless of any medical conditions, disabilities or allergies which they may have.

However, it is equally important that children with medical conditions or allergies are not unnecessarily excluded from taking part in activities with their peers and that reasonable steps are taken to accommodate their individual needs.

Medical Issues – Parental Responsibility

When children or young people join a rugby club, parents/carers should -

- Brief the Team Manager, Coach or First Aider about the specific needs of their child and how to address and accommodate these needs (i.e. medical issues etc.)
- Update the Team Manager, Coach or First Aider regarding any change in circumstances
- Consider a medic alert bracelet/watch for their child
- Check the expiry date of any medication regularly.
- Ensure that if the young person has a 'rescue pack' that, if necessary, this is given to the Team Manager, Coach or First Aider. This may include antihistamines for mild reactions, possibly an inhaler and may have adrenaline injectors for more serious reactions e.g. anaphylaxis

The more information made available to organisations the more the child or young person's needs can be catered for to ensure they reach their potential. Consent should be gained on an annual basis from parents, who should be given the opportunity to update information should the need arise.

If the child is attending a rugby festival or event, then the Team Manager or Coach must ensure that he/she is in possession of all the registration cards for the children where any allergies are documented. They should also ensure that medical staff are briefed regarding these issues. The Team Manager, Coach or First Aider should know where the nearest hospital is, in case it is required.

If you are providing food for the children, make sure that those with allergies are able to be included as much as possible and if they can't that a suitable alternative is found, ask parents/carers for a suggestion. If eating out with the group, parents may be able to recommend somewhere to eat that caters for their child's needs.

Medical Issues – Coaching and Management Teams

The Team Manager, Coach and First Aider should agree who is to be the responsible person in terms of managing medical issues (any could be the responsible person), as they have a duty of care in relation to children and young people in Welsh Rugby. The duty of care means that the club needs to take such measures as are reasonable in the circumstances to ensure that individuals will be safe to participate in an activity to which they are invited to or which is permitted.

There is no general duty of care upon members of the public towards the public at large. If there is a formal relationship, however, for example between a club and a club member or a coach and an athlete, there is a duty of care. When children and young people are involved in organised sports activities and are to any extent under the care and/or control of one or more adults, the adult(s) have a duty to take reasonable care to ensure their safety and welfare.

The duty occurs in two ways:

A Legal Duty of Care and a Moral Duty of Care

The Legal Duty of Care has a strict definition. The most obvious example of this is in health and safety procedures where clear guidance is provided about what reasonable steps should be taken to minimise the hazards related to activities, substances or situations. Liability for the legal duty of care would only arise when an incident occurs and it can be demonstrated that the risk was foreseeable but no action had been taken to remedy it.

The Moral Duty of Care is more correctly a responsibility for safety and welfare, a responsibility for those children and young people and other staff/volunteers that are under their control.

To determine if a breach of the duty of care has occurred, the ordinary civil law of negligence would be applied. The question is whether the person with responsibility in acting, or omitting to act, has failed to reach the standard of a reasonable person.

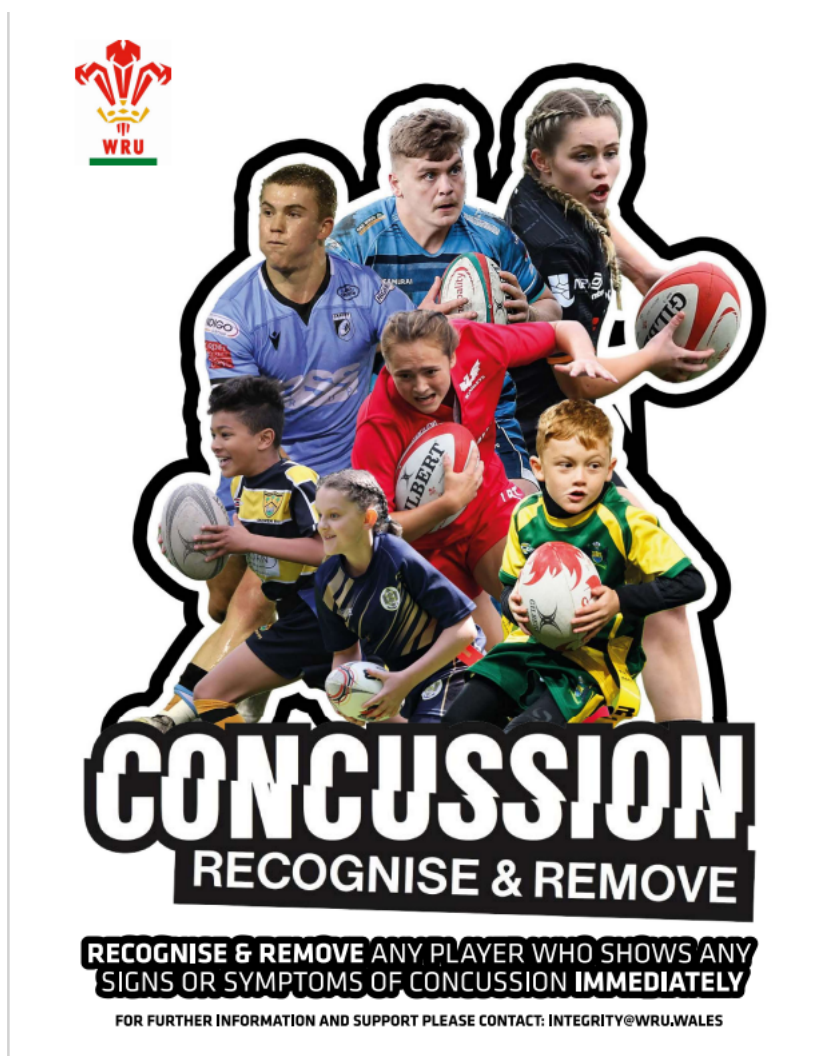
Team Managers, Coaches and First Aiders should be made aware of any allergies or other medical issues, by the child's parent or guardian. It is important that they are briefed on this issue, and they also need to communicate directly with the child or young person.

If there is a care plan in place they should be made aware of any of the details so that the staff can ensure that they manage the safety and welfare of children appropriately. They should also agree on who this information can be shared with (do the right people know?).

If there is an incident where a child is taken ill then this should be recorded, and any concerns should be documented accordingly. It is important that the responsible person has access to a mobile phone which is charged and with signal to allow calls to be made.

MANAGING CONCUSSION

The WRU have a guidance document in relation to managing concussion named 'Recognise and Remove' The link to this resource can be found here [Concussion Guidance](#)





DON'T BE A BYSTANDER

If you have any concerns please contact
the WRU Safeguarding Team

Integrity Line
02920 822 200

Safeguarding Mailbox E-mail
safeguarding@wru.wales

DON'T TACKLE IT ALONE

