



Blackbrook Royals Junior Rugby League Football Club Child Protection Policy



Together let's make it safe

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FOREWORD

The Blackbrook Royals Junior Rugby League Football Club consider that they have a moral obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for children and young players, all coaches, team representatives, and officials provide them with the highest possible standard of care Through the implementation of a child and young player protection policy, and with the support of its coaches, officials, and a growing number of governing bodies, we will maintain the professionalism and safeguards of good practice, which are associated with our game of rugby league In order to achieve this we have developed guidelines, and training opportunities will be made available within our club structure

The policy outlines the following key areas:

1. Recognising the responsibility of those involved in junior rugby league, to safeguard and promote the interests and wellbeing of the children and young players with whom they are working
2. The value of working closely with other coaches, parents, professionals, officials, and volunteers to protect children and young players from harm and discrimination
3. Recognising that abuse **DOES** take place in sport and that raising awareness and understanding of the main forms of abuse and establishing communication and reporting procedures if abuse is suspected will further safeguard the children, young players, coaches and all other working within our club structure

INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted that it is the responsibility of every adult to protect children and young people from abuse. Child abuse and particularly child sexual abuse can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation and it is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. It can happen to your children. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children in order to harm them.

Everyone working in the rugby league, either in a paid or voluntary capacity, together with those working in affiliated organisations has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of children and preventing their abuse. All adult club members, coaches, and officials may have regular contact with children and can be a very important link in identifying cases where protection is required.

When establishing guidelines concerning the protection of children, it is important to recognise that the organisation has both a moral and a legal obligation to ensure that when it is given responsibility for children, it provides them with the highest possible standard of care.

All persons involved in the Blackbrook Royals recognise that they have a responsibility:

- ❖ To safeguard and promote the interest and wellbeing of children with whom they are working
- ❖ To take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination, or degrading treatment
- ❖ Child protection procedures will:
- ❖ Offer safeguards to the children with whom we work, and to our coaches representatives and volunteers alike
- ❖ Help to maintain the professionalism and the safe guards of good practice which are associated with our club

It is recognised that any procedure is only as effective as the ability and skill of those who operate it. Blackbrook Royals JRLFC Committee is committed therefore to the sound recruitment, provision of support, and appropriate training for all their coaches, officials, and volunteers. This will enable them to work together with parents/carers and other organisations to ensure that the needs and the welfare of your children are paramount.



STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

- ❖ The young player's welfare is paramount
- ❖ All young players whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, racial origin, language, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- ❖ All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- ❖ Anyone under the age of 18 years should be considered as a young player for the purposes of this document

Working in partnership with the young players and their parents/carers is essential for the protection of the young players. All who are associated with the Blackbrook Royals JRLFC organisation recognise the statutory responsibility of the local social care department to ensure the welfare of the children and are committed to working together with local area child protection committees and to complying with their procedures



THE MAIN FORMS OF ABUSE

Abuse is a powerful and emotional term. Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults and often by those they know and trust. The coach often holds this trust and may be at risk of misusing his/her power over the young players. It is widely recognised that there are four main areas of abuse of which coaches, officials and volunteers should be aware. There may, however, be an increased risk within many sports, including rugby league, for abuse to occur which does not necessarily fit into these categories. The unique culture and traditions of rugby league, alongside so-called stereotypical behaviour, whilst common to many team sports, may give rise to unacceptable behaviour leading to situations where abuse may occur or coaches and/or young players are at increased risk.



THE FOUR MAIN TYPES OF ABUSE ARE:

Emotional Abuse

In general terms, emotional abuse occurs when adults persistently fail to show children due care, love or affection, where a child may be constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted, or be subject to sarcasm and unrealistic pressures. There may also be over-protection, preventing children from socialising, or bullying to perform high expectations. The child may lose self-confidence and may become withdrawn and nervous.

In a coaching situation, emotional abuse may occur when coaches:

- provide repeated negative feedback
- repeatedly ignore a young player's efforts to progress
- repeatedly demand performance levels above those of which the young player is capable
- over emphasise the winning ethic

Neglect

In general terms, neglect as a form of abuse occurs when a child's essential needs for food, warmth and care fail to be met. Failing to or refusing to provide love and affection could also be deemed as neglect.

In a coaching situation, neglect may occur when:

- young players are left alone without proper supervision
- a young player is exposed to unnecessary heat or cold without fluids or protection
- a young player is exposed to an unacceptable risk of injury

Physical

In general terms, this occurs when adults, or even children, deliberately inflict injury on a child, or knowingly do not prevent such injuries. It includes injuries caused by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or using excessive force. It also occurs when an adult gives children alcohol, or inappropriate drugs, or fails to supervise their access to these substances.

In a coaching situation, physical abuse may occur when:

Coaches expose young players to exercise/training, which disregards the capacity of the player's immature and growing body

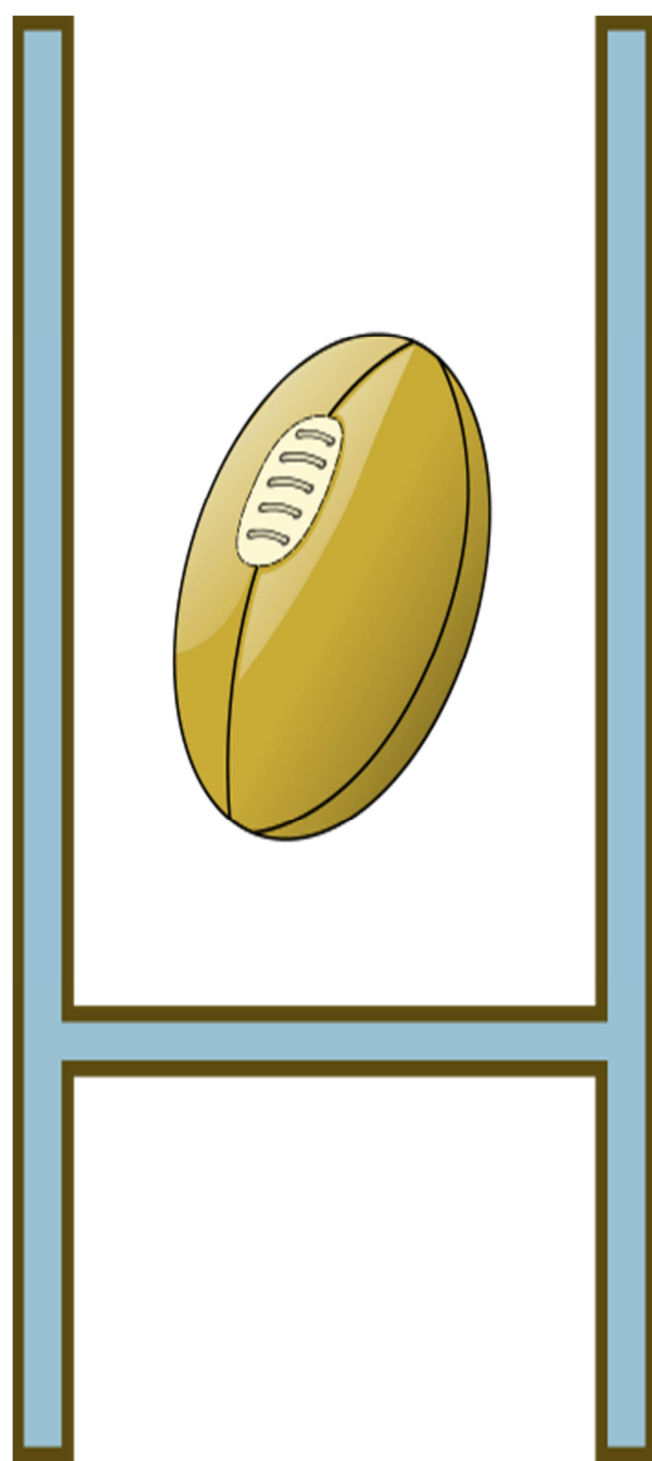
Coaches expose young players to injury due to overplaying, over training or fatigue

Coaches expose young players to alcohol, or give them the opportunity to drink alcohol below the drinking age

Coaches expose young players to performance enhancing drugs and recommend that they take them

Sexual Abuse

In general terms, girls and boys are abused by adults, both male and female, who use children to meet their own sexual needs. Examples include forcing a child to take part in sexual activity such as sexual intercourse, oral intercourse, masturbation, or oral sex or showing children pornographic material or making suggestions that sexual favours can help (or refusal hinder) a sporting career.



ABUSE TAKING PLACE WITHIN THE RUGBY ENVIRONMENT

This would include anyone working with children in a paid or voluntary capacity. For example, volunteer coaches in clubs, club helpers, tutors on training camps and coaches.

Child abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. Although it is a sensitive and difficult issue, child abuse has occurred within institutions and within other settings, for example, sport or other social activities. Recent research indicates that abuse, which takes place within a public setting, is rarely a one-off event. It is crucial that those involved in sport are aware of this possibility and that all allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action pursued.

The person in charge may be informed of situations where the reporter is unsure about whether the allegation constitutes abuse or not, and is therefore unclear about what action to take. There may be circumstances where allegations are about poor practice rather than abuse but those responsible should always consult with professional organisations, and seek advice from social services, or the NSPCC where there is any doubt. This is because it may be just one of a series of other instances which taken together cause concern. It is acknowledged that feelings generated by the discovery that a member of staff or volunteer is, or maybe, abusing a child, will raise concerns among other staff or volunteers, including the difficulties inherent in reporting such matters. However, it is important that any concerns for the welfare of the child arising from abuse or harassment by a member of staff or volunteer should be reported immediately.

The committee of the Blackbrook Royals JRLFC want to assure all staff, coaches and volunteers that they will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concerns that a colleague is or may be abusing a child.



ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST REPRESENTATIVES, COACHES, AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS

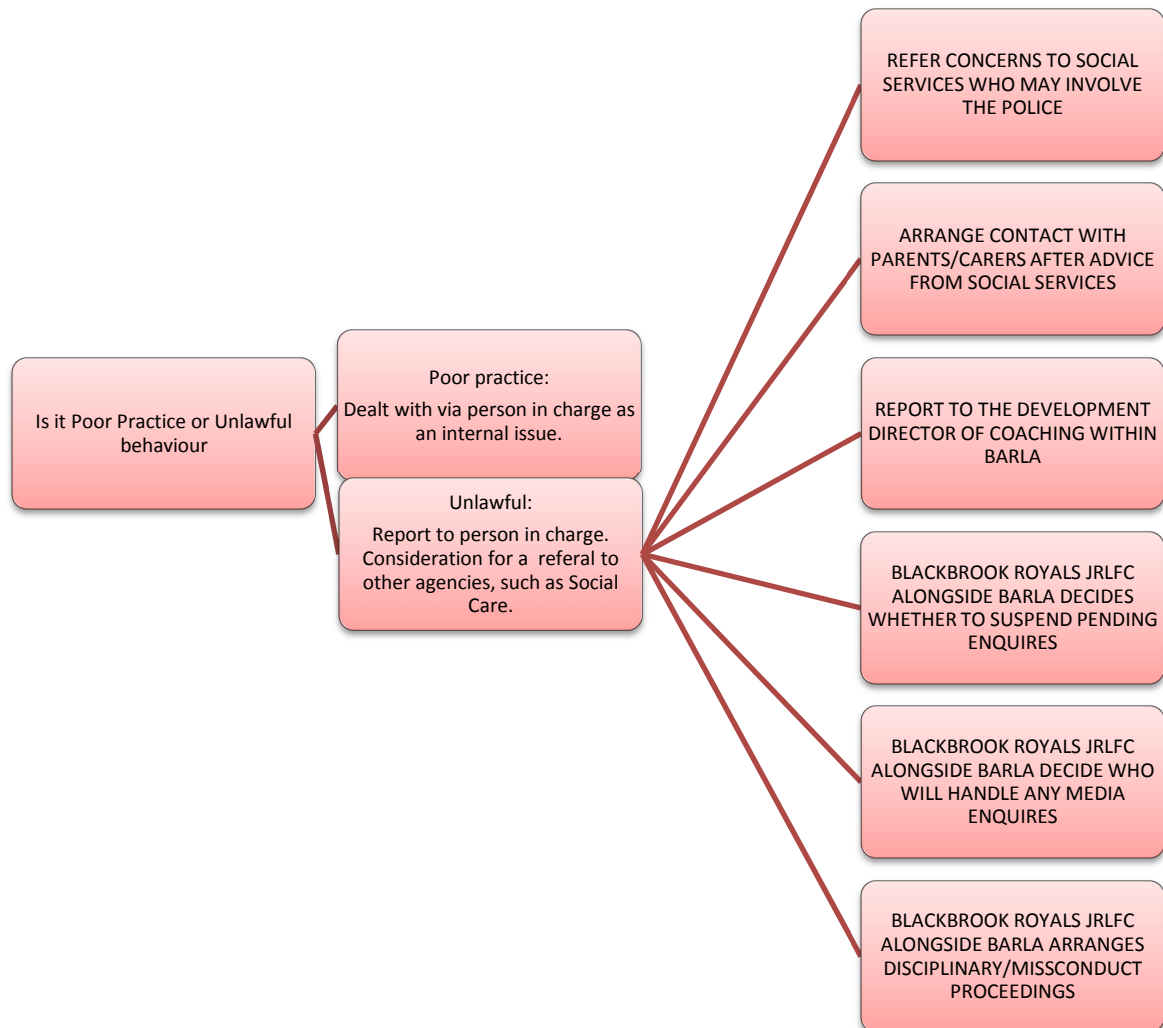
Where there is a complaint of abuse against any representatives, coaches or volunteer, there may be any one of the types of investigation:

- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation
- A child protection investigation
- A criminal investigation

The results of the Police and social services investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation



WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT THE BEHAVIOUR OF A MEMBER OF OUR STRUCTURE



Blackbrook Royals JRLFC recognises that young players are coached in a variety of environments and by any number of coaches. Thus the term “person in charge” will refer to the senior/head coach or club official responsible for the event such.

If, following consideration the allegation is clearly about poor practice then the “person in charge” will deal with it as an internal club issue. If the allegation is about poor practice by the “person in charge”, or where the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, then this should be referred to a member of the executive committee. Then this will be decided how this will be dealt with and whether or not to initiate a formal course of action.

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of the Blackbrook Royals JRLFC structure must be reported to a person in charge who will take such steps as he or she considers necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

The “person in charge” will, after consultation with the professional body, refer the allegations to social services department who may involve the police.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following the advice from the social services department.

The “person in charge” should also notify the child protection officer within the club, and between them decide who should deal with any media enquiries.

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.

If the “person in charge” is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the professional staff at BARLA who will then be responsible for taking any action outlined above.

The BARLA representative of the child protection will then decide as whether to suspend the accused of child abuse pending further police or social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or the police authorities, the child protection officer must assess all individual cases under the appropriate/ misconduct procedure, to decide whether a member of our structure can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particular where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the committee must reach a decision based upon the information that is available. The welfare of children must always remain paramount.

Consideration should be given to what support may be appropriate to children, their parents and other members of our structure. Where allegations are unfounded, our structure will work in a professional manner to ensure that the person concerned is given appropriate support if they wish to continue with his or her work with in rugby



ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE TAKING PLACE

OUTSIDE THE RUGBY ENVIRONMENT

YOU MAY BE AWARE OF ABUSE IN A NUMBER OF WAYS:

1. A child may tell you
2. A third party may have reported an incident, or may have a strong suspicion.
3. You may have the suspicion.

INDICATIONS OF ABUSE

Abuse in all its forms can affect a child at any age. The effects can be so damaging that, if not treated, they may follow an individual into adulthood. For example, an adult who has been abused as a child may find it difficult, or impossible, to maintain a stable, trusting relationship; may become involved with drugs or prostitution; may attempt suicide, or may abuse a child in the future.

There have been a number of studies suggesting disabled young people face an increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, isolation, or an inability to communicate. Children from the ethnic minorities, who may be experiencing racial discriminations, may be similarly powerless.

Dealing with child abuse is rarely straightforward. In some cases a child's disturbed behaviour, or an injury, may suggest that the child has been abused. In many situations however, the signs will not be clear-cut and decisions about what actions to take can be difficult. The signs and indicators in the following list are not exhaustive, and the presence of one or more indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place.

SIGNS AND INDICATORS FOR COACHES, OFFICIALS OR VOLUNTEERS TO BE AWARE OF:

- ✓ An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- ✓ The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her.
- ✓ Someone else, a child or adult, expresses concern about the welfare of another child.
- ✓ Unexplained changes in behaviour, for example becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden uncharacteristic outburst or temper.
- ✓ Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- ✓ Sexually explicit behaviour.
- ✓ The child is distrustful of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship will normally be expected.
- ✓ Has difficulty making friends.
- ✓ Is prevented from socialising with other children.
- ✓ Displays variations in eating patterns including over eating, loss of appetite loses weight for no apparent reason.
- ✓ Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.
- ✓ Use of sexually explicit language inappropriate to the age of the child.

NB: IT IS NOT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THOSE WORKING IN JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE TO DECIDE THAT ABUSE IS OCCURRING BUT IT IS THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT ON ANY CONCERNS



RESPONDING TO SUSPICIONS

It is understandable that people who are well-motivated, loving and caring individuals, with a deep commitment to their sport are reluctant to believe that children may be suffering harm in the sporting environment or at home.

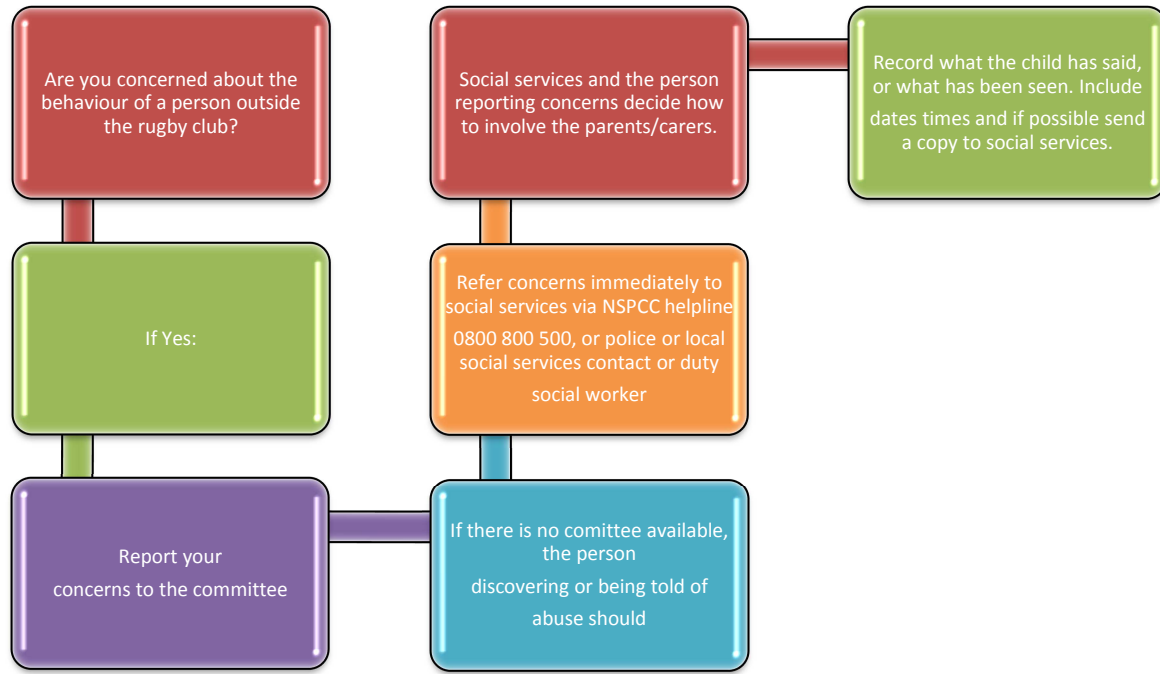
It may be difficult to accept that children could be at risk because of the way the organisation is being run and the attitudes of those involved.

Levels of awareness need not be raised without creating an atmosphere of anxiety or suspicion. However, a basic principle should be that **if you become aware of anything which causes you to feel uncomfortable you should talk to someone else about it.** This means being aware of the **attitudes** of all members of our structure and of the **interaction** between them and the children and with each other.

You should be alert to any unusual **incidents** or activities which take place where you feel that members of our structure are putting themselves in a vulnerable position.



WHAT TO DO WHERE ALLEGATIONS ARE BROUGHT TO YOUR ATTENTION



IF AN ALLEGATION IS BROUGHT TO YOUR

ATTENTION:

DO:

- STAY CALM – do not rush into inappropriate action.
- REASSURE THE CHILD – that they are not to blame and confirm that you know how difficult it must be to confide.
- LISTEN – to what the child says and show that you have taken him/her seriously.
- ALLOW ONLY ONE ADULT TO TALK TO THE CHILD – as any discrepancies in statements may lead to legal problems.
- ENSURE THAT YOU CLEARLY UNDERSTAND WHAT THE CHILD HAS SAID - and record it – so that you can pass it on to the appropriate agencies.
- CONSULT WITH YOUR IDENTIFIED CHILD PROTECTION PERSON – ensuring all the information is accurate.

DO NOT:

- DO NOT QUESTION THE CHILD. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed if it appears that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested.
 - DO NOT IGNORE WHAT HAS BEEN DISCLOSED. DO NOT CHALLENGE THE
 - PARENT/GUARDIAN - about your concerns.
 - DO NOT MAKE PROMISES YOU CAN'T KEEP – explain that you may have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening whilst maintaining maximum
 - confidentiality.
 - DO NOT MAKE THE CHILD REPEAT THE STORY UNNECESSARILY.
 - DO NOT DELAY – the reporting procedure
-

PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE WITHIN THE **RUGBY CLUB ENVIRONMENT**

All young players have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect.

1) DATA PROTECTION

Information collected by the Blackbrook Royals JRLFC structure, or by affiliated clubs on behalf of the governing body, with particular reference to person details relating to young players, is subject to the **data protection act**.

2) RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STAFF, COACHES AND VOLUNTEERS

Anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and it is important that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from work with children. It is essential the same procedure be used consistently throughout the game.

The governing body recommend that when undertaking pre-selection checks clubs should adopt the following procedure:

All coaches, volunteers and club members and club members who are in contact with young players should complete a membership application and self-declaration form.

Application forms should be designed to elicit information about an applicant's past career (including any gaps), and to establish any criminal record. Failure to disclose information will result in exclusion from the club or organisation.

Consent must be obtained from applicants for police and social services checks; this will be carried out by the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service).

Where it is deemed appropriate, at least two references should be taken up, including at least one regarding previous work with children.

Clubs should have effective measures in place to ensure the information received in relation to applicants is treated in the strictest confidence.

Blackbrook Royals JRLFC reserves the right to pursue Police and Social Care checks.

3) POLICY AND PROCEDURE

To help prevent abuse of children the club should have a policy, which ensures that children are protected and kept safe from harm. Everyone involved in the care of children should be aware of the procedures if there are any concerns about abuse.

4) TRAINING

It should be clearly recognised that checks are only part of the process to protect children from possible abuse by club members. These must be operated in conjunction with appropriate training of staff, coaches and volunteers so that they are aware of, and sensitive to possible situations of abuse.

5) SUPERVISION

Coaches, volunteers and club members should be sensitive to any concerns about abuse, and act on them at an early stage; they should also offer appropriate support to those who report concerns.

6) COMPLAINTS

The Blackbrook Royals JRLFC committee will ensure that there is a well-established complaints procedure in operation and those parents and their children have the relevant information that will allow easy access to this procedure.

We can reduce situations for the abuse of children and help to protect staff and volunteers by promoting good practice



GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE

- 1) Always be publicly open when working with children Avoid situations where you and an individual child are completely unobserved.
- 2) Rugby is a physical game. Situations will occur when, in order to teach or coach certain techniques, it is necessary to make contact with a player. If this is the case, tell the player beforehand and ask them if they have any objections.
- 3) If groups are to be supervised in changing rooms, always ensure that adults work in pairs, and that gender is appropriate.
- 4) All staff officials/coaches and volunteers should shower separately from the young players.
- 5) Where mixed teams compete there should always be accompanied by at least one male and one female.
- 6) Volunteers and visiting professionals must respect the rights and dignity and worth of all and treat everyone with equality
- 7) Coaches must place the wellbeing and safety of the player above the development of performance.
- 8) Coaches should:
 - Avoid overplaying of players (particularly talented players).
 - All players need and deserve equal opportunity to play.
 - Remember that children play for fun and enjoyment and that winning is only part of it.
 - Ensure that contact skills are taught in a safe, secure manner paying due regard to the physical development of young players.
 - Never allow young players to train or play when injured.

- Ensure equipment and facilities are safe and appropriate to the age and ability of the players.

9) Coaches must hold a valid coaching card.

10) Coaches must ensure that the activities which they direct or advocate are appropriate to the age, maturity and ability of the players.

11) Coaches should always promote the positive aspects of their sport (e.g. fair play); never condone law violations or use of prohibited substances.

12) Coaches must constantly display high standards of personal behaviour and appearance.

13) Coaches should never overtly criticise players or use language or actions, which may cause the player to lose self-esteem or confidence.

EVERYONE SHOULD BE AWARE THAT, AS A GENERAL RULE, IT DOES NOT MAKE SENSE FOR A COACH TO:

- Spend amounts of time alone with children or youths away from others.
- Take children or youths alone on car journeys however short.
- Take children or youths to your home.

If it should arise that each situation are unavoidable they should only take place with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club / governing body and / or a person with parental responsibility for the player.

If you should accidentally hurt a player, or cause distress in any manner, or the player appears to respond in a sexual manner to your actions, or

misunderstands, or misinterprets something you have done, report the incident to a colleague supported by a brief written report of the incident as soon as possible. Parent / carer should also be informed of this occurrence.

YOU SHOULD NEVER:

Engage in inappropriate physical contact, including horseplay.

Share a room with a player.

Permit any form of inappropriate touching.

Permit players to use unacceptable or explicit language unchallenged.

Make sexual suggestive comments to a player, even in fun.

Agree to meet a player on your own, outside the context of the normal coaching, refereeing or mentoring process.

Allow allegations made by a player to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.

Do things of a personal nature that a player can do for themselves. It may be necessary for a volunteer to do things of a personal nature for some players particularly if they are very young or disabled. Such tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent / carer. There is also a need in these instances to be responsive to the player's reactions – if a player is fully dependent upon you, talk with him or her about what you are doing and give choices where possible.

APPENDICES

- ❖ Guidelines for recruiting coaches
- ❖ Blackbrook Royals JRLFC shortcut to the Child Protection Policy
- ❖ Blackbrook Royals JRLFC Code of Conduct

GUIDELINES FOR RECRUITING COACHES

Whenever recruiting a coach the club will make sure that:

- 1) All coaches complete an application form that will allow you to:
 - a) Find out about their past career.
 - b) Find out if they have a criminal record.
- 2) You ask for two written references and then follow them up. One must relate to work with children.
- 3) All information given to you by individuals about themselves is kept confidential.
- 4) All coaches provide you with an up-to-date enhanced criminal record certificate.
- 5) All completed application forms reference forms are stored carefully for future reference.
- 6) Every applicant knows the clubs attitude to the child protection of children from abuse and receives a copy of the clubs written policy and its code of conduct for coaches.

BLACKBROOK ROYALS JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB
SHORTCUT TO THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

At Blackbrook Royals JRFLC we believe that taking part in our sport should be a positive and enjoyable part of children's lives. We want to make sure that children are protected and kept safe from physical, sexual and emotional harm while they are with the clubs coaches and other volunteers.

To do this we have these aims:

- 1) All coaches will go on a coaching course before or during the work with children.
- 2) All coaches and other volunteers will have a job description.
- 3) We will encourage both sexes to pursue coaching certificates.
- 4) All coaches will be qualified to the awards to suite the relevant age.
- 5) The club will encourage and help coaches stay up-to-date with rugby coaching and child protection issues.
- 6) All coaches will be given a copy of the clubs code of conduct for coaches and be expected to keep to it at all times.
- 7) We will keep written records of complaints, parental consents, and any accidents.
- 8) We will provide coaches and parents with a written procedure for dealing with accusations or suspicion of child abuse.
- 9) As a club, we will promote "a fair play" and always play within the spirit of the laws and the letter of the continuum.
- 10) We will identify a person whose role it is to deal with any concerns about physical, sexual or emotional abuse with in the club.

BLACKBROOK ROYALS JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB CODE OF CONDUCT

All coaches, within the Blackbrook Royals JRLFC are made up from a total voluntary structure with our own constitution, from which all involved has a responsibility too.

This code has been written to remind or inform all of the responsibilities and the minimum standards of behaviour commensurate with fulfilling them. Each season every active party will be called upon to warrant that they have read, understood and intend to abide by this code.

PLAYERS

1. Rugby is only a part of a player's life, recognise this and allow for it in your demands on them.
2. Treat games against other clubs as lessons, opportunities to learn, not as a test.
3. Rugby is for everyone, the Royals are for everyone. Don't rely on STAR players and never make any player feel like a spare part. Share game time and your time in practice sessions.
4. Never ridicule any player. Never belittle any player. Always make a player feel valued.
5. Find out what makes each player tick. Know about their family background and their other interest. Be able to spot and then explain changes in their behaviour.
6. Find out the facts about child development and the physical, intellectual and emotional capabilities of the age group you work with.

RUGBY LEAGUE

7. Rugby is a dangerous game which relies on every participant playing in the spirit of mutual respect. Teach the players you work with meaning of fair play and set them a good example.
8. Rugby works best when both sides are evenly matched. Insist on mixing and matching against ill matched teams.
9. Learn the laws and learn to referee correctly with no biases.
10. Teach players, by your own example to respect the referee's ALWAYS.

COACHING

11. When you can call yourself a coach you apply to join an elite group; when others call you a coach you have achieved membership. You owe it to yourself and to all other coaches to behave as a coach:

- A) Always look like a coach, always act like a coach.
- B) Start on time and finish on time.
- C) Plan your season.
- D) Do not drink alcohol before you work or while you are working with children.
- E) Do not smoke while working with children
- F) Do not use abusive language.

12. To be a good coach, you need up to date information on coaching issues and rugby issues Stay in Touch.

13. You are responsible for the safety of the players you work with:

- A) Mark out a safe work area and keep it safe, Make sure equipment is in good condition.
- B) Never join in with contact drills and games. You are too big and too hard and you will hurt them.
- C) Do not encourage or allow players to play on injuries.
- D) Do not let players play out of their age groups
- E) Ensure every player is registered before training and playing.

14. Do not put yourself in a position where you could be suspected of, or accused of, physical or sexual abuse of any child associated with the club. Use separate changing rooms from players, never be alone with individuals behind closed doors and never shower with boys or girls.

15. Tell players and keep telling yourself that winning and losing are only by products of performance. We are there to play and to enjoy playing, nothing more.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document was completed on April 2016, and is accurate up to the date's legislation.

All photographs in the document have had permission by a consenting adult.

Authored by Selina Kent – Approved my Executive committee.

Review Date: 2018