



Community Rugby Directorate
***Youth, Mini, Rascals, Ladies
and Bears***

***Coaches, Players & Parents
Handbook***

Version: AUGUST 2021





INTRODUCTION

The Youth, Mini, Rascals, Ladies and Bears Sections of Ballymena Rugby Football Club form the basis of the Community Rugby Directorate and are fully committed to the mental, physical and emotional development of its Age-Grade Players, to the best of their individual abilities, by creating an acceptable, ethical coaching framework, and to safeguard the well being of its Participants and Volunteers, by protecting them from neglect, and physical, sexual or emotional harm. Fair play, mutual understanding and cross-community aspects play an important role in the ethos of the Club.

This handbook summarises from the Ballymena RFC Club Welfare Policy the code and conduct we expect for both Parents and Players in order to ensure the maximum safety and fun for all involved. We hope you will take the time to read this and talk to your children about its contents.

Our Vision

Our Rugby Club provides a lasting and positive impact on the lives of all our young people.

Our Mission

To provide our players so far as possible with the best start to sport and the game of Rugby.

We would like take this opportunity to thank you for your support and cooperation and wish you all a safe, enjoyable and rewarding experience during your time at BRFC.

Thank you
In Rugby
Director Community Rugby
Ballymena RFC



Full details of our Club Welfare Policy and Procedures are available from the club website at www.ballymenarugbyclub.com

The website also contains further information regarding Coaching, Long Term Player Development and Registration.

Players: If you are not happy, worried or unsure about anything that is happening in your rugby group then please speak to your Parents / Carer, Club Welfare Officer or Coach.



ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Club Youth Convenor and Mini Rugby Convenor shall:

- Be a member of the Club Board of Governors and Community Rugby Committee.
- Ensure that all information relevant to Age Grade players is circulated to club coaches and volunteers and that regular meetings are held with Age Grade Volunteers.
- Ensure that all official policies and developments relating to Age Grade players are informed and adhered to including all safeguarding issues and policies by both players and volunteers.
- Work closely with the Director of Community Club, other Convenors and Club Welfare Officer to ensure all activities are safe, co-ordinated and make best use of BRFC facilities and that volunteers are appointed in accordance with policy.
- Keep up-to-date records of volunteers and ensure all participants and volunteers sign an IRFU Declaration of Intent.
- Represent the Age Grade sections on the appropriate Ulster Branch Committee.
- Organise the collection of details of Age Grade players for the purpose of Registration.
- Organise the coaches / volunteers and suitable coaching training for all Age Grade teams.
- Scrutinise Age Grade Section Volunteer application forms and self-declaration forms.
- Organise the keeping of attendance records for all sessions and planned activities.

The current Club Youth Convenor and Mini Rugby Convenor can be contacted through the club.



Age Grade Group Head Coaches

Head Coaches shall:

- Arrange the registration of new/returning players in light of the appropriate player to coach ratio.
- Form a group of volunteers / coaches to assist with the delivery of training and match supervision and keep up-to-date records of volunteers and ensure all sign an IRFU Declaration of Intent.
- Ensure that all official policies and developments relating to Age Grade Rugby are informed and adhered to including all safeguarding issues and policies by both players and volunteers.
- Monitor training programme (i.e. variations for weather, cancellations etc).
- Roll Call (allocate people to take roll) and monitor attendance over period.
- Notify training forecast to group coaches.
- Co-ordinate equipment availability and pre-season purchases.
- Organise the Pre-session set up.
- Supervise Session discipline and behaviour - monitor for disputes, bad behaviour.
- Maintain and Co-ordinate Session timings and general direction of activity.
- Pass information to the other Coaches and volunteers in the group and act as the central point of contact for the Group.
- Attend coach meetings as appropriate.
- Work closely with the Club officials and Club Welfare Officer regarding Safeguarding and Child Protection issues.

Club Welfare Officer

Has responsibility to:

- Act as a resource to all members with regards to young person's issues.
- Ensure that children have a say in the running of the Club.
- Promote the values, attitudes and structures which make sport enjoyable to all participants.
- Communicate with Ulster Branch and Club Officers information relating to young people in sport.
- Attend Club training sessions to act as a resource to children and volunteers.
- Encourage involvement of parents / guardians in Club activities.
- Report regularly to relevant Club Committees.
- Influence policy and practice within the Club to prioritise young person's needs.
- Accept and act upon reports from other Volunteers.
- Report cases of child protection concerns to the Northern Health and Social Services Board, and to the relevant Statutory Authorities.

The current Club Welfare Officer can be contacted through the club. Details are in the clubhouse foyer.



HEALTH & SAFETY at EATON PARK

So far as is reasonably practicable the club will try to ensure the health and safety of all those visiting Eaton Park. Everyone, however, is expected to co-operate with the club and to take reasonable care of their own safety and of others whilst they are on the grounds. Anyone can/should report any dangerous incident/accident which causes, or may cause, a personal injury or damage to property.

Eaton Park has a strict **“No Dog”** policy due to the risk of disease and infection from fouling, please do insist on this from everyone you see with a dog and ask them to keep their pet in the car during their time on site.

Everyone (adults & children) should be aware of the areas of the club which are out of bounds. Whilst all reasonable care will be taken to supervise all children teams during training sessions, these hazards remain constant. The most effective means of accident prevention is to avoid the hazard:

The following are Out of Bounds Areas for everyone’s safety:

- **Woods behind the pitches.**
- **Apparatus at rear of the clubhouse.**
- **Scrummaging Machine (unless with appropriate coach and conducting training).**
- **Match Commentator Tower.**
- **All riverside areas.**
- **Club House Balcony (access allowed only when given by appropriate authority).**

Take care when moving around Eaton Park and be aware of moving vehicles



IF YOU ARE A DRIVER, SPEED LIMITS ARE THERE TO PROTECT EVERYONE,

REMEMBER: KILL YOUR SPEED NOT A CHILD!



MINI & YOUTH PLAYER CHARTER

- 🏈 Play for enjoyment and become part of the rugby family.
- 🏈 Do not “bully” or take advantage of any player.
- 🏈 Respect the Game of Rugby and play within the laws of the Game.
- 🏈 Accept the referee’s decision and let your captain or coach ask any relevant questions.
- 🏈 Play with control. Do not lose your temper.
- 🏈 Always do your best and be committed to the game, your team and your club.
- 🏈 Be a “good sport”. Applaud all good play whether by your team or the opposition.
- 🏈 Respect your opponent. Treat all players, as you would like to be treated.
- 🏈 Rugby is a team sport and make sure you co-operate with your coach; teammates and members of your club.
- 🏈 Remember that the goals of the game are to have fun, improve your skills and feel good.
- 🏈 At the end of the match thank your opponents and the referee for the match.
- 🏈 Always remember that you owe a duty of care to your opponents. Tackle hard but fairly, do not intend to hurt your opponent.
- 🏈 Winning and losing is part of sport: Win with humility – lose with dignity.
- 🏈 As part of the team it is important that you attend training regularly and listen to your coach and help your team.
- 🏈 As a team sport it is important to understand that all members are important to the team!
- 🏈 Remember you are representing your team, club, family and the Game of Rugby.



PARENTS CHARTER

It is your responsibility to ensure that the young people you are responsible for have:

- The correct kit / equipment and that it is in a good state of repair. Are suitably dressed for the weather conditions forecast and will be warm and dry in the event of inclement weather.
- Inform your year coach of any underlying injuries or medical conditions which may have occurred from the start of the season when you filled out the Club registration form.
- Been informed who they may talk to if they have any concerns or worries.
- Are dropped off and escorted to the area they are training at and handed over to a member of the coaching staff.
- Are picked up by ensuring you arrive at games/training in plenty of time to collect your children. If you are running late it is your responsibility to let us know so we can make appropriate provision.
- Know the areas of the club which are out of bounds and ensure your children know them.
- Remember, young people play rugby for their enjoyment, not yours.
- Encourage your child always to play by the Laws of the Game.
- Help young people to work towards skill improvement and good sportsmanship.
- Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides. Never ridicule, humiliate or shout at young players for making a mistake or losing a match.
- Do not place emphasis on winning at all costs. Teach young children that honest endeavour is as important as winning, so that the result of each game is accepted without disappointment.
- Do not force an unwilling child to participate in the playing of rugby. If the child is to play, he/she will do so in good time through your encouragement.
- Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from rugby.



PARENTS CHARTER CONT

- As a spectator do not use profane language or harass referees, coaches or players.
- Do not publicly question the referee's judgement or their honesty.
- Recognise the value and importance of volunteer referees and coaches.
- Identify and acknowledge the good qualities of the Game of Rugby and uphold these values.
- Remember you and your child's contribution to the Game of Rugby are very important to the IRFU and be proud of your contribution.
- Understand the value of team sport and its importance.

Parental Contact with Coaches

These Guidelines, whilst extensive, do not cover every scenario and are to be used as an indicator of Best Practice. We promote open, transparent, ethical and child friendly policies.

PLEASE DO - Show Respect and treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself.

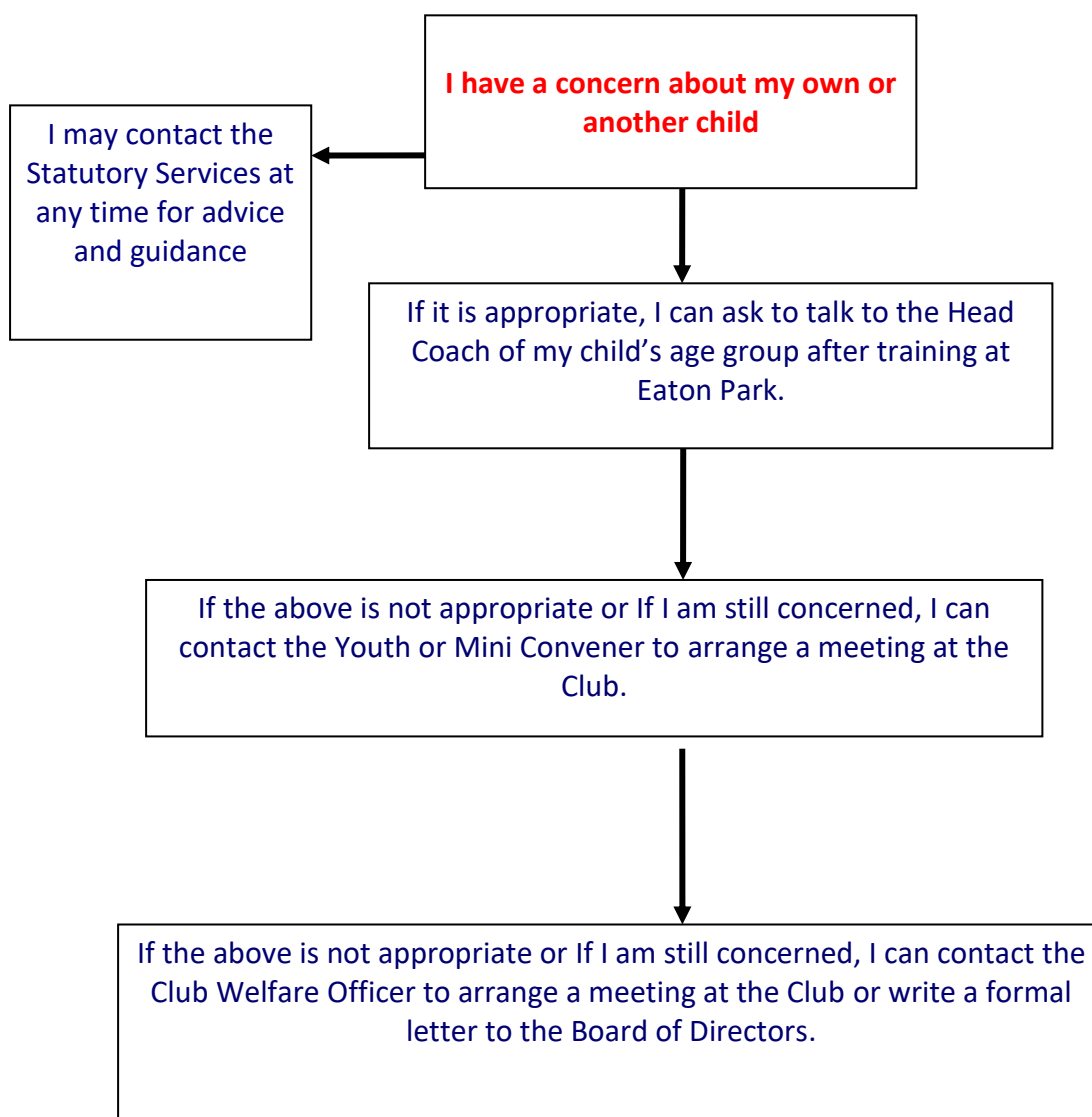
- All our Coaches are volunteers and as such must be afforded courtesy and their efforts recognised. Parents are asked to work with them constructively.
- Ballymena RFC are keen that all participants reach their full potential and this is done in a safe environment for everyone involved with Age Grade Rugby.
- Ballymena RFC subscribes to the policies and procedures of the IRFU with regard to Long Term Player Development, IRFU Safeguarding and Mini / Youth Rugby Regulations
- All our coaches have the best interests of your child at heart and give of their time freely.
- All concerns must be dealt with as per the established Protocol outlined earlier in this document.
- All dealings with volunteers should be amicable, constructive and free from confrontation.
- Violent or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated.
- We will investigate any incidents which are formally raised through appropriate channels using the established club disciplinary protocols.
- Anyone found to have acted inappropriately will be subject to investigation and appropriate sanctions will be enforced.
- The Club retains the right to cancel or suspend a member's subscription and discontinue their involvement with Age Grade Rugby.



Complaints / Concerns / Queries

While the Club Welfare Officer is happy to be contacted about significant matters or about concerns that you have not been able to resolve, the majority of complaints, concerns and queries can be best put right at an early stage and by direct contact with the Head Coach directly involved with your child's age group. All contact must take place within the framework established by the IRFU and in Ballymena RFC Club Welfare Policy. All concerns will be dealt with promptly and confidentially.

Simplified Action Chart for Parent's with concerns





What's Needed to Play Rugby?

The season runs from September through the winter, to late April. At the start of the season, jerseys, shorts etc. should be fine. In the colder weather children can still wear their BRFC jerseys, but make sure they have sufficient clothing underneath.

Tracksuit bottoms with zips are not allowed in those age groups where full contact rugby is played.

Children are encouraged to bring their own drinking flasks especially if it is sunny.

For Rascals and Bears there is no need to purchase specific rugby clothing, as there is a whole lot of growing to be done! For them, they just need play clothes you do not mind getting dirty. More importantly Rascals and Bears should be warm and especially in the deep winter, hats and gloves are a must.

As it becomes wetter and muddier, boots will be essential. Soccer boots are OK, but make sure the studs are aluminium, and the approved IRB kite-marked type. Insist on the correct studs from your retailer!

The Club recommends that players in all age groups wear gum shields and shin guards at all times, for most age groups this is mandatory for both training and games, check with your lead coach. Gum shields tailor-made by your dentist are ideal. However, sport shops and the Club Shop sell DIY versions that you soften by heating in boiling water and then mould around the teeth. Rascals and Bears, as their sessions are totally non-contact, need not have a gum shield to play (the final decision for these groups rests with the parent/guardian).

Where appropriate, only registered players wearing official IRB approved trial sports goggles can play contact age grade rugby at P3 and above (i.e. any form of contact rugby. Tag, SEN Tag and Leprechaun; appropriate goggles are allowed). Should you wish to take part in the trial please use the address below to find out more:

http://playerwelfare.worldrugby.org/goggles?utm_source=Club+List&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=IRFU+Accepted+onto+goggles+trial

Players wearing anything other than these approved and branded goggles should be asked to remove these items before play commences irrespective of which club they belong to. Any breach of this directive could negatively affect player insurance cover.



Smoking, Alcohol & Drugs - Club Policy

Smoking

- Anyone who does not comply with the Smoke Free Law will be committing a criminal offence. Smoking is prohibited within all Ballymena RFC buildings and breach of this important safety rule may result in removal from the club.
- Only those who are the appropriate legal age are allowed to smoke on club property. Anyone found smoking who is not the legal age should be requested to extinguish the cigarette and if appropriate their guardian / carer informed of the incident. Smoking should be avoided by the Age-Grade Player. Smoking is a serious health risk. It should play no part in a player's lifestyle.

Alcohol

- Alcohol should only be consumed on club property by those who are the appropriate legal age. Anyone under the legal age found to be drinking on club property should be requested to stop and if appropriate their guardian / carer informed of the incident. It is a legal requirement not to sell alcohol to anyone under age.

Drugs

- Ballymena RFC is concerned to provide a safe and healthy sporting environment. It recognises that this can be put at risk by those who misuse drugs to such an extent that it may affect their health, performance, conduct and relationships. The effects of drugs in sport can also create serious health and safety risks not only to the player but also fellow team mates and opposition. The following rules should be adhered to by all age grade players, coaches and helpers:
- ***Do not come to Ballymena RFC under the influence of non-prescribed drugs.*** Instances of this being discovered may be reported to a member of the Club Board of Directors, PSNI, Parents/Carer and appropriate social services.
- Do not bring non-prescribed drugs onto club premises. Instances of this being discovered may be reported to the Club Board of Directors, PSNI, Parents/Carer and appropriate social services.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist about the side-effects of prescribed medications and inform your team coach if required.
- Offer support and advice to players who you suspect of suffering from alcohol or drug abuse: Do not "protect" them by keeping silent.
- Ask for assistance if you feel that matters are beyond your own control. Your request will be dealt with in strictest confidence subject to the provisions of the law.



In the event of an accident

The Coach should:

- Stop the activity immediately.
- Quickly assess the extent of the injury.
- Give immediate appropriate treatment, remaining mindful of limitations listed earlier.
- If the injury is worse than trivial, contact the Paramedics and Ambulance in attendance, or phone the emergency services on 999.
- Make contact with the child's parents.
- Record in detail all facts surrounding the accident, including the names of witnesses.
- The IRFU Serious Injury and Concussion Report Form must be completed by the head coach of the appropriate age grade team (see CWP Appendices for correct form).
- The form once complete should then be submitted to either the Director of Community Rugby, the CWO or direct to the Club Secretary who is responsible for maintaining all records of injury / concussion within the club.
- The Hon Secretary will then post or email to the relevant provincial office within 1 week of injury occurrence. The purpose of the form is to ensure that all serious injuries and suspected / confirmed concussions are reported to the IRFU and provincial branches and that a record is kept of these injuries for insurance purposes. Injury reporting is a requirement of the IRFU insurers.
- The form can be downloaded at <http://www.ulsterrugby.com/rugby-in-ulster/resources/player-welfare.php#.ViANm8vwvIU> and copies are available in the clubhouse.
- Serious Injury Definition – Any injury occurring during rugby training or game, which requires that the injured player is transported to and / or treated in hospital.
- Concussion – see www.irishrugby.ie/concussion for further information on concussion.