



CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

The Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) provides rugby activities to young people through participation in 203 affiliated clubs and 4 Branches and through national programmes and events, including representative panels, mini and youth coaching and competitions, squad camps and participation programmes in schools and related youth events.

The IRFU is committed to the enjoyment of rugby by young people. It values and encourages the participation of parents, coaches and volunteers in rugby for participants under 18-years of age. The policy of the IRFU regarding safeguarding children is to respect the dignity and rights of Age Grade Players.

The IRFU will strive throughout its organisation and spheres of influence to promote, create and maintain safe environments for Age Grade Players. It will endeavour to maintain the key values of Respect, Inclusivity, Integrity, Excellence and Fun. A detailed safeguarding policy can be found here, <https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/safeguarding-policy/> and the Sports Councils' Code of Ethics/Safeguarding Guidance should be used where the IRFU has not published specific guidelines, in particular with regard to the principles to safeguard children from harm, <https://www.sportireland.ie/ethics/safeguarding-guidance-for-children-and-young-people-in-sport>

The IRFU carried out a risk assessment for any potential harm to a child while involved in rugby. These risks were categorised under the following headings Recruitment, Club and Coaching Practices, Reporting, Complaints, Facilities, Communication and General Risk of Harm. The assessment reviewed the areas of potential risk of harm, the likelihood of the risk occurring, and gives the required policy, guidance and document links required to manage these risks. The written risk assessment and the procedures for managing these risks is available at the end of this statement and on the IRFU website, <https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/>

Our child safeguarding statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015 and in Northern Ireland, the Club Framework for Safeguarding Standards. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures are in place as part of the IRFU Safeguarding Policy and support our intention to safeguard children:

- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children, <http://www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/development/safeguarding/recruitment.php>
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm, <http://www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/development/safeguarding/training.php>
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection and welfare concerns to Tusla (Ireland) and Gateway (Northern Ireland) through the National Safeguarding Officer and appointed Mandated Person within IRFU: Anne Marie Hughes (086 0485977 / annemarie.hughes@irfu.ie). The National Safeguarding Officer is the Relevant Person as per Children First Act. Other staff and volunteers within the organisation may hold the role and responsibility of a Mandated Person as per Schedule 2 of the Act but have not been appointed by the

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IRFU and/or its affiliated clubs or organisations. They are always expected to act as a Mandated Person and when making a report in their professional capacity that involves rugby should always inform the IRFU Mandated Person that such a report has been made by them.

- Procedure for the management of allegation of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service and can be found in the case management policy, <http://www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/development/safeguarding/concerns.php>
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person for the purposes of the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement
- Procedures to minimise risk of harm of a child have been put in place and are available in the IRFU Safeguarding Policy, <https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/safeguarding-policy/>

All procedures listed are available on the IRFU website, <http://www.irishrugby.ie/safeguarding>. The IRFU expects those involved within club age-grade rugby to adopt and supervise the implementation of these safeguarding principles and standards. The IRFU recognises that implementation is an ongoing process. It is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and accompanying safeguarding policy and procedures to keep children involved in rugby safe from harm. The IRFU created the Club Action Plan in 2016 and audits clubs annually in accordance with this plan, <https://d19fc3vd0jo3m.cloudfront.net/irfu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/31120516/Club-SafeguardingAction-Plan.pdf>

The Safeguarding Policy is included in IRFU HR procedures and in relevant club documentation, it is an essential condition for funding for the Club Support Scheme. Relevant staff have received a copy of the policy and signed adherence through the Declaration of Intent. The Child Safeguarding Statement and related safeguarding policies are available to all parents/guardians and members of the public through the IRFU website and is available on request, <https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/>

Spirit of Rugby staff are appointed to assist clubs with the implementation of the policy and are available to train Club Welfare Officers and related personnel and to deal with club queries. They can be contacted at:

- Connacht: Luke Murphy – luke.murphy@connachtrugby.ie
- Leinster: Stephen Gore – stephen.gore@leinsterrugby.ie
- Munster: Emily O'Leary – emilyoleary@munsterrugby.ie
- Ulster: Kerry Spence – kerry.spence@ulsterrugby.com

Club Welfare Officers have completed relevant safeguarding training. They have been supplied with ID templates for display within club grounds and/or club websites, guidance and templates for carrying out a risk assessments and publishing the child safeguarding statement, a club action plan, an anti-bullying statement, club pavement signs and Spirit of Rugby 'Let Them Play' video clips. They have also received training in vetting through the 'IRFU registration system'. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed in June 2023, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers. For queries please contact the Relevant Person, Anne Marie Hughes, annemarie.hughes@irfu.ie

Signed: *MP Coughlan*
MP Coughlan Chair of Spirit

Signed: *Peter O'Brien*
Safeguarding Chair on Spirit Committee

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IRFU RISK ASSESSMENT

This risk assessment considers the potential for harm to come to children whilst they are in the care of the Irish Rugby Football Union and gives the required policy, guidance or process documents required to alleviate these risks. This risk assessment has been carried out prior to the publication of the IRFU's Child Safeguarding Statement (Section 11 (1b) Children First Act 2015). In this context and in accordance with the requirements of *Section 11 (1) of the Children First Act 2011*, that states "as a provider of a relevant service we will undertake an assessment of any potential harm to a child while availing of the service"; the risk is of abuse and not general health and safety risk. This risk assessment is also in accordance with Sport Northern Ireland's Club Framework for Safeguarding Standards in Sport and as such can be used by the IRFU's constituent Provinces.

The risk assessment indicates the areas of potential risk of harm, the likelihood of the risk occurring, and gives the required policy, guidance or process documents required to alleviate these risks. *The list of risks identified and procedures to manage these risks are listed in relevant categories overleaf and are based on the IRFU Club Action Plan.*

IRFU Responsibilities

- IRFU has **appointed a National Safeguarding Officer** to implement the IRFU Safeguarding Policy and to monitor the implementation of the associated Club Action Plan by Club Welfare Officers. The National SG Officer holds the role of Relevant Person for the organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement and also is the appointed Mandated Person
- This risk assessment has been completed with National Safeguarding Officer and other members of Spirit of Rugby Committee
- The Committee recorded this risk assessment at the July 2021 Spirit of Rugby meeting and published a Child Safeguarding Statement thereafter.
- All Age-Grade staff and volunteers (e.g. coaches, manager, team assistants) working regularly and continuously with Irish Squads (or where their role is a necessary part of working) with young people and/or vulnerable adults have been vetted and have signed the Declaration of Intent.
- The IRFU has a Mandated Person and listed their contact in the Child Safeguarding Statement.
- Templates were developed and distributed to clubs, along with links to relevant policies

This document was completed by National Safeguarding Officer on behalf of the Spirit Committee and approved by the Spirit Committee in July 2021. On completion of this the IRFU will complete and publish the Child Safeguarding Statement signed by Chair of Safeguarding from the Spirit Committee and the National Safeguarding Officer.

Peter O'Brien

Peter O'Brien
Signed by Safeguarding Chair

Anne Marie Hughes

Anne Marie Hughes
Signed by National Safeguarding Officer

The Risk Assessment was undertaken on 24th June 2011 and will be reviewed in May 2023 in line with updated Safeguarding Policies

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Risk Assessment

Risk Identified: Club and Coaching Practices	Level	Procedures in Place	Monitoring of Risk
<p>Risk if relevant staff and volunteers are not aware of the safeguarding policy as it relates to club and coaching practices</p> <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of harm if there is not a consent form for each player U-18 years of age, with parental permission, with relevant medical information and permission to participate, photographic permission and travel consent, (use template in IRFU Registration system) • Codes of Conduct for age-grade players and parents published and/or on view • Risk of harm if staff and volunteers do not know policies in relation to supervision, social media and photographs • Risk of harm if staff and volunteers are not aware of travel and away trips procedures • Risk of harm of abuse, including online, through bullying and inappropriate use of social media <p>These policies have been made known to those working with Age-grade players</p>	High	<p>Safeguarding Policy - https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/safeguarding-policy/ and https://d19fc3vd0jo3m.cloudfront.net/irfu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/16153839/Club-and-Volunteer-Responsibilities-Age-Grade-Rugby-v2.pdf</p> <p>Codes of Conduct - https://d19fc3vd0jo3m.cloudfront.net/irfu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/16153845/Code-of-Conduct-Parents.pdf</p> <p>Bullying https://d19fc3vd0jo3m.cloudfront.net/irfu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/31120508/Anti-Bullying-Statement.pdf</p> <p>Social media guidance - https://d19fc3vd0jo3m.cloudfront.net/irfu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/31120545/Staying-Safer-Online.pdf</p> <p>Travel guidance - hosting & away trips https://d19fc3vd0jo3m.cloudfront.net/irfu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/25120840/Travel-touring-hosting.pdf</p>	<p>CSS and Codes on display at event / in clubhouse / on website / social media</p> <p>Information sessions to parents and squad members</p> <p>Anti-bullying statement is on display – use IRFU templates</p> <p>Info session for staff (re: travel, non-collection, overnight/hosting)</p>

Risk Identified: Communication	Level	Procedures in Place	Monitoring of Risk
<p>Risk of harm if not communicating with staff, volunteers, parents and players</p> <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Safeguarding Statement and safeguarding policies communicated to members and staff so there is high awareness of safeguarding information • CWO ID template visible and communicated to all staff and volunteers working at IRFU events so contact can be made if harm is identified • Safeguarding information made available on sign up so that parents and players know standards of behaviour 	High	<p>IRFU Policy and Child Safeguarding Statement visible on website and available to all parents on registration process - https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/safeguarding-policy/</p> <p>ID template distributed to Spirit staff and made available to relevant camps, etc.</p>	<p>CWO template on website and sent to all camp staff</p> <p>Letter sent to all Hon Sec outlining policies and procedures</p>

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Risk Identified: Recruitment	Level	Procedures in Place	Monitoring
Risk of recruiting inappropriate people to work with young people Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a WO that is vetted and trained to SG2 standard All relevant Age-Grade staff and volunteers successfully completed the necessary vetting requirements All relevant Age-grade volunteers signed Declarations of Intent that clearly outlines their role Age-grade section have put in place adequate supervision processes in accordance with IRFU Safeguarding Policies Copies of reference for visiting / unknown coaches if applicable are sought 	High High High	Recruitment Policy , https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/recruitment/ Audit of Rugby Connect for outstanding vets weekly, emails relevant CWO or Spirit of Rugby Officer as necessary. Spirit of Rugby Officer to check with head coaches that adequate supervision is in place according to guidelines, https://d19fc3vd0ojo3m.cloudfront.net/irfu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/25120828/Supervision-Safety.pdf	Vetting and DoI renewals every 2-years through Rugby Connect

Risk Identified: Complaints / Concerns	Level	Procedures in Place	Monitoring
Risk of harm if complaints and reporting procedures are not in place Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of harm (physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect) of a child by a staff/volunteer/child if reporting procedure not known Name of Branch & National Safeguarding Person is listed and visible within camp/squad facilities The IRFU Mandated Person is listed on the CSS Parents know how to raise a concern Age-grade squad member can make their concerns known Do all those involved with age-grade know how to raise a concern with Spirit Staff and/or to follow Children First / Our Duty to Care reporting process? Staff know how to deal with complaints and raise a concern using case management form 	High Med High High Med Med	Reporting Procedures - https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/concerns/ Parents information - https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/parents-guardians/ Case Management Reporting Form https://customervoice.microsoft.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=JRVazqodokKeM_5ulrGDeIERAZC3HTJNIFmj9hBUz8ZUMlIVSjQxNjEzUTQ4MFRRMVBIOVpXSTBGUi4u Young People rights and reporting procedures - https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/young-people/	Spirit staff to ensure necessary links to IRFU policy are displayed Spirit Officers deliver training regularly
Risk of harm when using facilities Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If hiring facilities has the squad / club checked that appropriate safeguarding procedures have been put in place Anti-bullying statement is made 		Facilities Information - https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/medical/ Event leads to request CSS and/or safeguarding policy, along with anti-bullying statement and CWO ID templates	Spirit Staff to support event staff as requested

available to all staff for display and distribution to children and parents at camps, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate medical procedures are in place at the facility 			
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Risk Identified: General	Level	Procedures in Place	Monitoring
Risk of untrained people working with young people <u>Considerations</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding personnel completed all Sport Ireland / SNI safeguarding training and other necessary staff and volunteers received appropriate safeguarding training as per IRFU training factsheet • Risk of harm (physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect) of a child by a staff/volunteer/child if coaches are not trained • Coaches completed safeguarding training presentation with Spirit Officer and/or SG1 • Coaches working with Age-grade squads are appropriately trained for the level of rugby they are coaching 		Training Policy, https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/training/ Spirit Officers send out link to online training and record on Gainline/Rugby Connect. SOs have trained relevant staff in risk of harm and reporting procedures and CDMs have trained head coaches using 2021 rugby specific safeguarding training	AMH to email SO with information for Academies and summer camps annually

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