



GHK RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

2026/27 SEASON

Applies to: GHK RFC, including Junior Rugby, Minis, Midis, youth, coaches, volunteers, officials, parents/carers, visitors and other club members.

Policy owner: GHK RFC Committee

Safeguarding Officer (CPO): Lara Williamson

Assistant Safeguarding Officer: Nichola Martin

Review date: August 2027, or sooner if Scottish Rugby guidance, legislation or club arrangements change

1. Policy Statement

GHK RFC acknowledges its responsibility to protect and safeguard the wellbeing of everyone involved in the club. We are committed to providing a safe, welcoming, inclusive and positive environment in which children, young people, adults at risk and adults can participate in rugby without fear of abuse, neglect, harm, bullying, discrimination, exploitation or poor practice.

GHK RFC adopts and will operate in accordance with Scottish Rugby's current Safeguarding Everyone Policy, supporting guidance and procedures. This club policy should be read alongside current Scottish Rugby safeguarding guidance, RugbyRight requirements, PVG requirements, club codes of conduct, tour procedures, equality and inclusion arrangements and relevant Scottish legislation.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Any person who has a concern about the wellbeing or safety of another person must report it promptly in accordance with this policy. A person does not need to prove abuse or harm before raising a concern.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all GHK RFC activities, including training, matches, competitions, tours, travel, camps, social events, clubhouse activities, communications, online activity and any other activity undertaken on behalf of or representing the club.

The policy covers children and young people under 18, adults at risk and, where relevant, safeguarding concerns affecting adults more generally.

3. Safeguarding Officers

GHK RFC has appointed Safeguarding Officers who are the principal points of contact within the club for safeguarding advice, concerns, training and support.

- Lara Williamson – Safeguarding Officer (SO) – 07766 316959



- Nichola Martin – Assistant Safeguarding Officer – 07770 552947

The Child Protection Officer and Assistant Child Protection Officer details will be kept visible and accessible through the clubhouse and the GHK RFC website. The club should maintain a dedicated safeguarding contact route where practicable and should update Scottish Rugby and SCRUMS whenever safeguarding officer details change.

The Safeguarding Officers will complete the safeguarding training required by Scottish Rugby, maintain appropriate confidential records, support good practice, manage concerns, liaise with Scottish Rugby and statutory agencies where required, and report to the Club Committee.

4. Responsibilities of the Club

- Promote a culture in which safeguarding and wellbeing are treated as a priority.
- Ensure this policy is available on the club website and on request.
- Recruit, appoint and manage coaches, volunteers and officials appropriately.
- Ensure people undertaking regulated roles have the required PVG membership and that records are maintained.
- Ensure coaches and match officials complete the current Scottish Rugby RugbyRight requirements annually where applicable.
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are reported promptly and handled fairly, sensitively and confidentially on a need-to-know basis.
- Provide suitable supervision, staffing, facilities, first aid arrangements and risk assessments.
- Ensure tours and overnight activities follow current Scottish Rugby requirements.
- Provide accessible ways for children and young people to raise worries or concerns.

5. Recruitment, PVG and Training

GHK RFC will assess roles involving children, young people and/or adults at risk and will comply with current Scottish Rugby and Disclosure Scotland requirements for regulated roles. No person may undertake a regulated role until the required rugby PVG is in place and approved by Scottish Rugby. The SO will maintain appropriate club PVG records and ensure relevant information is recorded through the systems specified by Scottish Rugby.

The Child Protection Officer and Assistant Child Protection Officer must complete the current Scottish Rugby safeguarding training requirements, including the relevant Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport and Safeguarding Officer training and adult safeguarding learning where required. Coaches and match officials must complete the current annual RugbyRight requirements applicable to their role.

Safeguarding training records and PVG status should be maintained through the systems specified by Scottish Rugby, including SCRUMS where applicable.

6. Good Practice for Coaches, Volunteers and Officials

- Put the wellbeing and safety of players ahead of performance, selection or results.
- Treat every player with dignity, respect and fairness.



- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and never use a position of trust for personal benefit.
- Avoid unnecessary one-to-one situations; where individual support is required, use an open, observable environment and appropriate safeguards.
- Never engage in inappropriate physical contact, sexualised behaviour, humiliating treatment, intimidation or discriminatory language.
- Do not form personal or sexual relationships with players under 18. Such relationships are never appropriate where a position of trust exists.
- Challenge bullying and harmful behaviour and report concerns promptly.
- Use only approved club communication channels for communication with under-18 players and follow the club's digital communication arrangements.
- Do not privately message under-18 players from personal social-media accounts.
- Never transport a child alone unless there is a genuine emergency and the circumstances are reported and recorded.
- Follow appropriate supervision, changing-room, travel, medical and collection arrangements.

7. Recognising and Responding to Concerns

A concern may arise from a disclosure, observation, allegation, change in behaviour, low-level concern, online communication, bullying incident or information received from another person.

If someone tells you something that causes concern:

- Stay calm and listen.
- Take the person seriously and reassure them that they have done the right thing by speaking up.
- Do not promise secrecy or confidentiality. Explain that information may need to be shared to keep someone safe.
- Use open, non-leading questions only where necessary to understand what has happened.
- Do not investigate, confront an alleged perpetrator or attempt to prove what happened.
- Write down what was said or observed as soon as possible, using the person's own words where practicable.
- Report the concern to a GHK Safeguarding Officer immediately and, where required, to Scottish Rugby or statutory services.

Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm or an emergency, contact Police Scotland or emergency services as appropriate. The safety of the person at risk takes priority.

8. Reporting, Referral and Recording

The Safeguarding Officer will determine the appropriate next steps, seeking advice from Scottish Rugby's Safeguarding Team and/or statutory agencies where necessary. Concerns should not be delayed while waiting for certainty.

Records should be factual, dated and signed where appropriate, and should include:

- what was said, seen or reported;
- who was involved;



- date, time and location;
- any immediate action taken;
- who was contacted and what advice was received;
- decisions made and the reasons for them.

Records must be stored securely and shared only with people who have a legitimate safeguarding reason to receive them. The club must comply with applicable data protection and information-sharing requirements.

9. Low-Level Concerns and Positions of Trust

GHK RFC recognises that safeguarding is not limited to allegations of serious abuse. Low-level concerns, boundary issues, repeated poor practice or behaviour that may indicate a pattern must be taken seriously and reported to a Safeguarding Officer.

Coaches, team managers, volunteers and others in positions of trust must maintain clear professional boundaries. Any concern involving an inappropriate personal, intimate or sexual interaction between a person in a position of trust and a player under 18 must be reported immediately.

10. Bullying, Harassment, Equality and Inclusion

GHK RFC does not tolerate bullying, harassment, discrimination, victimisation or abusive behaviour. Bullying can occur face-to-face, online, through social groups or through repeated exclusion or intimidation. The impact on the person affected is more important than whether harm was intended.

All players, coaches, volunteers and parents are expected to respect others regardless of age, gender, disability, race, cultural background, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender identity, language or ability.

Reports of bullying or discriminatory behaviour will be listened to, recorded and addressed proportionately. Safeguarding advice will be sought where the behaviour creates a risk of harm.

11. Online Safety and Digital Communications

- Official GHK RFC social-media accounts must be controlled and monitored by designated club representatives.
- At least two authorised club representatives should have appropriate access to official accounts.
- Personal information such as a child's home address, school details or private telephone number must not be published.
- Parents/carers should provide appropriate consent for photographs and video to be used by the club, in accordance with the club's registration and privacy arrangements.
- Coaches and volunteers must not use personal social-media accounts to privately communicate with under-18 players.
- Club communications with under-18 players should be necessary, appropriate, transparent and, where appropriate, visible to another responsible adult.



- Any safeguarding disclosure made online must be treated as a safeguarding concern and reported through the normal procedure.
- The same safeguarding principles apply to current and future digital platforms, messaging applications and technology.

12. Changing Rooms, Photography and Physical Contact

- Coaches and volunteers must follow appropriate changing-room and shower supervision arrangements.
- Photography or filming is not permitted in changing rooms or showers.
- Physical contact should be appropriate, necessary, proportionate and related to coaching, safety or the activity.
- Players should be supported to maintain dignity and privacy.
- Any concern about inappropriate touching, photography or behaviour must be reported.

13. Trips, Tours, Overnight Stays and Transport

All GHK RFC tours, overnight stays and travel involving children or young people must comply with the current Scottish Rugby tour requirements and any applicable World Rugby regulations.

- Obtain appropriate parental/carers consent and medical information.
- Maintain an itinerary, emergency contacts and a clear record of who is travelling.
- Ensure appropriate staffing and supervision arrangements.
- Confirm PVG and safeguarding requirements for all relevant adults.
- Complete appropriate risk assessments and accommodation checks.
- Set clear expectations for behaviour, supervision, free time, communication and alcohol.
- Ensure transport, insurance and emergency arrangements are appropriate.
- Record and review incidents or safeguarding concerns arising during the trip.

14. Player Code of Conduct

- Respect teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, volunteers and spectators.
- Play within the laws of rugby and accept officials' decisions.
- Do not bully, threaten, discriminate against or deliberately harm another person.
- Do not use abusive, racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise discriminatory language.
- Follow reasonable instructions from coaches and team managers.
- Tell a trusted adult or Safeguarding Officer if something makes you feel unsafe, uncomfortable or worried.
- Do not smoke, vape, consume alcohol or use illegal drugs while representing GHK RFC or participating in club activities, subject to applicable law and club rules.
- Use social media and messaging responsibly and never share harmful, threatening, sexual or humiliating material involving another player.



15. Parent and Carer Code of Conduct

- Support your child's participation and enjoyment rather than focusing solely on results.
- Respect coaches, officials, opposition players, volunteers and other families.
- Never use abusive, threatening or discriminatory language or behaviour.
- Do not publicly challenge or undermine officials or coaches.
- Raise concerns through the appropriate club channels rather than through social media or in front of children.
- Follow club arrangements for collection, transport, changing areas, photography and communication.
- Tell the club about relevant medical, welfare or safeguarding information that may affect your child's safety.

16. Child-Friendly Reporting

Children and young people at GHK RFC should know that they can speak to a coach, team manager, parent/carer, Safeguarding Officer, Assistant Safeguarding Officer or another trusted adult if they are worried about something.

They should be listened to, taken seriously and supported. The club will provide clear, age-appropriate information about who they can contact and how to raise a concern.

17. Adults at Risk

GHK RFC recognises that safeguarding responsibilities can also apply to adults at risk. Concerns about abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm involving an adult at risk will be managed in accordance with Scottish Rugby guidance and relevant Scottish legislation, including the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.

Where consent is relevant, the club will respect an adult's wishes unless there is a lawful or safeguarding reason to share information without consent, including circumstances involving serious risk to life or harm, risk to others, lack of capacity or a serious crime.

18. Review and Governance

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where there are changes to Scottish Rugby policy, legislation, safeguarding practice, club structure or identified risks.

The Club Committee will ensure that the policy is implemented and that the Safeguarding Officers have appropriate access to the committee and the authority to escalate concerns.

19. Key External Guidance

This policy is intended to operate alongside, and not replace, current Scottish Rugby safeguarding policies and procedures, Disclosure Scotland PVG requirements, Police Scotland and local authority safeguarding procedures, and relevant Scottish legislation.

- Scottish Rugby – Safeguarding Everyone Policy and supporting club guidance.



- Scottish Rugby – Club Safeguarding Officer guidance and training requirements.
- Scottish Rugby – RugbyRight training and safeguarding module.
- Disclosure Scotland – PVG Scheme requirements.
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and applicable information-sharing requirements.

The 5 R's – Scottish Rugby Safeguarding Approach

Recognise – Be alert to signs, disclosures, changes in behaviour, poor practice, bullying, online concerns or anything else that may indicate a person is at risk.

Respond – Stay calm, listen, take the concern seriously, reassure the person and avoid leading questions or promises of secrecy.

Report – Tell the SO or Assistant SO promptly. If there is an immediate risk or emergency, contact Police Scotland/emergency services as appropriate.

Record – Make a factual, dated record of what was seen, heard or disclosed, the actions taken and who was contacted.

Refer – The SO/Assistant SO will seek advice and make appropriate referrals to Scottish Rugby and/or statutory agencies where required.

Scottish Rugby Safeguarding Team: safeguarding@sru.org.uk | Police Scotland: 101 (999 in an emergency)

20. Approval

Approved by GHK RFC Committee:

Kenneth Cowan
President GHK RFC on Behalf of the Committee

Date: 7 September 2026

Next review: August 2027

Version Control

Version	Date	Owner	Change
1.0	August 2026	GHK RFC Committee	Updated for 2026/27 and aligned with current



Scottish Rugby
safeguarding guidance

Next review

August 2027

GHK RFC Committee

Annual review or earlier
if Scottish Rugby
guidance or legislation
changes