

World Rugby Safeguarding Policy



**WORLD
RUGBY**

INTRODUCTION

Consistent with the values of World Rugby, every member of the rugby community has a right to respect, safety and protection, including players, coaches, officials, staff, or volunteers. The welfare of all members of the rugby community, particularly children and adults at risk, is of paramount concern. When any member of the rugby community is subjected to or engages in abuse or harassment, it is inconsistent with the values of the Game of Rugby and undermines the unique character of our sport. All forms of harassment and abuse are prohibited by World Rugby's Code of Conduct and Integrity Code and will not be tolerated by World Rugby.

World Rugby has developed and adopted this Policy to set out how it will work to promote a safe rugby environment, both independently and in partnership with other necessary parties, including Regional Associations, Unions, International Rugby Players, and the rugby community. World Rugby will promote a safe rugby environment by putting in place safeguards for all participants to create an enjoyable and inclusive culture with the aim of preventing all forms of harassment and abuse. Where unacceptable behaviours arise, procedures, structures and systems are in place to allow concerns to be reported and responded to in an appropriate way.

All members of the Rugby community are reminded that where safeguarding concerns arise, it may be necessary to report them not only to World Rugby and/or the relevant Member Union, but also to the relevant local statutory authority/ies (including police and child/adult protection agencies). Making a safeguarding report as detailed below does not preclude or prevent such a report being made. Where an urgent and serious concern is reported then the principle should be one of 'no delay' and relevant statutory agencies contacted immediately.

1. Purpose

1.1. This Policy aims to:

- a. Provide a framework for safeguarding the wellbeing of all members of the rugby community;
- b. Define harassment and abuse;
- c. Explain to whom the Policy applies;
- d. Set out how harassment and/or abuse can be reported and the process that follows; and
- e. Explain the disciplinary process for cases arising from breaches of this Policy.

2. Definition of Safeguarding, Harassment and Abuse

- 2.1. Harassment and abuse can be related to and can occur regardless of a person's age, race (including skin colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), gender reassignment, sex, sexual orientation, disability, language, religion or philosophical beliefs or athletic ability. It can include a one-off incident or a series of incidents. It may be in person or online. Harassment is sometimes but not always identified through deliberate, unsolicited, and coercive behaviour.

- 2.2. Harassment and abuse often result from an abuse of authority, meaning the improper use of a position of influence, power, or authority by an individual against another person.
- 2.3. Harassment and abuse can be expressed in five forms which may occur in combination or in isolation. These include psychological abuse, physical abuse, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and neglect. These forms of abuse are defined here as:
 - a. Psychological abuse: means any unwelcome act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilisation, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth.
 - b. Physical abuse: means any deliberate and unwelcome act, such as for example punching, beating, kicking, biting, and burning, that causes physical trauma or injury. Such act can also consist of forced or inappropriate physical activity (e.g., age- or physique-inappropriate training loads; including when injured or in pain), forced alcohol consumption, or forced doping practices.
 - c. Sexual harassment: means any unwanted and unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical. Sexual harassment can take the form of sexual abuse.
 - d. Sexual abuse: means any conduct of a sexual nature, whether non-contact, contact or penetrative, where consent is coerced/manipulated or is not or cannot be given.
 - e. Neglect: within the meaning of this Policy means the failure of a coach or another person with a duty of care towards a player or other Covered Individual as defined below to provide a minimum level of care to the relevant person, which is causing harm, allowing harm to be caused, or creating an imminent danger of harm.
- 2.4. “Safeguarding” in rugby means preventing harassment or abuse of any member of the rugby community in a rugby-related situation and responding appropriately where a report of harassment or abuse is made.
- 2.5. Other defined terms used herein shall have the meanings given to them in World Rugby Regulation 1.

3. Scope of Application

- 3.1. This Policy shall apply to all “Covered Individuals” which shall mean:
 - a. Players, Persons, Contract Persons, Agents, and any member of a Regional Association, Union, Club or Rugby Body (each as defined in World Rugby Regulation 1) (which for the avoidance of doubt includes any person involved or participating in rugby including coaches, volunteers, medical and other support persons, officers and staff, match officials and disciplinary personnel);
 - b. World Rugby, Regional Association and Union employees, officers, agents, consultants and/or contractors;
 - c. Members of World Rugby’s Council, Executive Committee and any committee or working group appointed by the Council or Executive Committee;
 - d. Any elected or appointed member of any committee of a Regional Association, Union, Club or Rugby Body;
 - e. Any person working or volunteering at any event held by or on behalf of World Rugby (including events in relation to which hosting rights were appointed by World Rugby).

- 3.2. It shall be the responsibility of every Covered Individual to make himself or herself aware of and to comply with this Policy. Covered Individuals should also be aware that conduct prohibited under this Policy may also constitute a criminal offence and/or a breach of other applicable laws and regulations.

4. Breach of Policy

- 4.1. The following conduct constitutes a violation of this Policy:
- a. Psychological Abuse;
 - b. Physical Abuse;
 - c. Sexual Harassment;
 - d. Sexual Abuse;
 - e. Neglect;
 - f. Complicity: assisting, encouraging, aiding, abetting, conspiring to engage in or concealing any violation of this Policy;
 - g. Failure to cooperate/obstruction:
 - i. Failing to cooperate with any investigation carried out by, or on behalf of, World Rugby in relation to a potential breach of this Policy, including, without limitation, failing to provide accurately, completely and without undue delay any information and/or documentation and/or access or assistance requested by World Rugby as part of such investigation.
 - ii. Obstructing or delaying any investigation that may be carried out by, or on behalf of, World Rugby in relation to a possible violation of this Policy, including without limitation concealing, tampering with, or destroying any documentation or other information that may be relevant to the investigation.
 - h. Retaliation: negative treatment of any person because they have made a report under this Policy (or any applicable equivalent safeguarding policy or rule)

5. Education and Prevention

- 5.1. Educational materials to assist Covered Individuals in complying with this Policy are available at [World Rugby Safeguarding](#).

6. Mutual Recognition of Decisions and Sharing of Information

- 6.1. Subject to the right of appeal, any decision taken by World Rugby pursuant to this Policy must be recognised and implemented by all Regional Associations and Unions.
- 6.2. Subject to the right of appeal, any decision taken by a Regional Association or Union, pursuant to its Safeguarding Policy, shall be recognised by World Rugby, and each Regional Association and Union.
- 6.3. World Rugby shall promptly inform a Union of any allegation and/or sanction imposed on any Covered Individual under their jurisdiction relating to any case involving a breach of this Safeguarding Policy.
- 6.4. Regional Associations and Unions shall promptly inform World Rugby of:
- a. any allegation regarding, and/or sanction imposed on, any Covered Individual under their jurisdiction relating to any Safeguarding matter; and/or

- b. any allegation regarding, and/or conviction for a criminal offence imposed on, any Covered Individual which would constitute a violation of this Policy.
- 6.5. World Rugby may as appropriate take into account and/or recognise criminal convictions and/or other decisions imposed by public authorities, other sports governing bodies and/or other properly-convened bodies in respect of equivalent offence(s) as defined in this Policy and may impose sanctions accordingly as provided for in this Policy. For the avoidance of doubt there shall be no form or time limit applicable to the recognition of any decision by World Rugby pursuant to this paragraph 6.5. Where World Rugby recognises such a decision, the decision shall thereafter be recognised automatically (without the need for further formality) by all Regional Associations and Unions.
- 6.6. The standard of proof in criminal matters is usually beyond reasonable doubt whereas the standard of proof in cases arising from this Policy is the balance of probabilities. For that reason, there may be cases where a Covered Individual is charged but not convicted of a relevant and related criminal offence but yet is found to have breached this Policy.
- 6.7. In respect of non-World Rugby cases as set out in paragraph 6.4, where appropriate World Rugby reserves the right to open a separate Disciplinary Procedure against the relevant individual(s).
- 6.8. in relation to his/her World Rugby-related activities.

7. Reporting

- 7.1. For reporting any Harassment or Abuse or any Safeguarding] concerns, World Rugby will take a report in the way that is most comfortable for the person submitting the report including (but not limited to):
 - a. by email to World Rugby's reporting email address: confidential@world.rugby (noting that anonymous reporting although preferable to no reporting may restrict or prevent the proper investigation of incidents);
 - b. in-person (to the Integrity Officer appointed to any World Rugby tournament (contact details noted in the Terms of Participation) and/or to World Rugby's Safeguarding Officer);
 - c. by telephone (to the specific Integrity Officer appointed to any World Rugby tournament (contact details noted in the Terms of Participation)); or
 - d. by written report to:
Safeguarding Officer
World Rugby
World Rugby House
8-10 Pembroke Street Lower
Dublin 2
Ireland
- 7.2. Regardless of the method of reporting, it would be helpful to World Rugby to receive the following information (if possible):
 - a. name of the person reporting the concern(s);
 - b. type of misconduct alleged;
 - c. name(s) of the alleged victim(s) or person(s) impacted;
 - d. dates/locations or any other helpful information;
 - e. names of any other people who may have witnessed the incidents;
 - f. the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct.

- 7.3. Individuals may wish to complete and submit the “Incident(s) Report Form” at Appendix 1 and available at [World Rugby Safeguarding](#)
- 7.4. Further details of the reporting procedures relating to this Policy are outlined in Appendix 2.
- 7.5. To the extent permitted by law, and as appropriate, World Rugby will handle any report it receives confidentially and discreetly and will not make public the name(s) of the person(s) reporting the concern(s), potential victim(s) or person(s) impacted, person(s) of concern or accused person(s); however, World Rugby may disclose such names on a limited basis: when conducting an investigation; or reporting to relevant authorities; or reporting to Regional Associations and/or Unions; or when required to do so under applicable law; or if the concerned person gives his/her prior consent. If disclosure is necessary to protect someone from harm or if a potential criminal act comes to the attention of World Rugby, World Rugby shall report the matter to the relevant authorities.
- 7.6. Following receipt of an allegation of a breach of this Policy, World Rugby shall consider whether it is appropriate to notify other individuals and/or the parents (or legal guardians) of minors with whom the person of concern may have had contact. As appropriate or required by law, World Rugby may notify relevant persons, i.e., Regional Associations, Unions, tournament directors, staff members, contractors, volunteers, parents (or legal guardians), and/or Players of any such allegation that (a) law enforcement authorities are actively investigating; or (b) that World Rugby is investigating. Advising others of an allegation may lead to additional reports of harassment or abuse and other misconduct.

8. Investigation Procedures

- 8.1. World Rugby’s Safeguarding Officer will investigate any concerns reported in accordance with this Policy, whether arising from a report in accordance with paragraph 6 above or otherwise and shall be appointed as the “Designated Disciplinary Officer” in accordance with World Rugby Regulation 18 (Misconduct). Where appropriate, World Rugby may instruct external experts to investigate any Safeguarding issues on its behalf.
- 8.2. World Rugby may consult or appoint external independent investigators where appropriate.
- 8.3. World Rugby may consult with a Case Management Group (a suitably qualified group of independent experts appointed to assist World Rugby in processing cases arising under this Policy).
- 8.4. The procedures that the Safeguarding Officer (or their nominee) will follow are set out in Appendix 2.

9. Disciplinary Procedure

- 9.1. Where a decision is taken to charge a person with Misconduct for a breach of this Policy, the matter shall be referred to an independent Judicial Committee for consideration and the procedures set out in World Rugby Regulation 18 shall be applied. These procedures are summarised in Appendix 2.
- 9.2. Where appropriate, World Rugby may wait until the final outcome of any related criminal or civil proceedings is known before deciding whether or not to refer a case to a Judicial Committee.

9.3. A Judicial Committee appointed in accordance with World Rugby Regulations 18 and 20 shall have jurisdiction to make a determination on alleged breaches of this Policy in the first instance (including in respect of provisional suspensions). The Judicial Committee may, either on its own initiative or upon the application of one or all of the parties concerned, stay the proceedings before it pending the outcome of any related criminal or civil proceedings.

10. Measures and Sanctions

10.1. Where an independent Judicial Committee has determined that a breach of this Policy has taken place, the subject of the Misconduct Decision shall be sanctioned in accordance with the process set out in World Rugby Regulation 18. The following factors should be included in the consideration by the Judicial Committee when determining the proportionality of the sanction imposed: the nature and severity of the violations; the number of violations; any other relevant circumstances (e.g., when the abused or harassed person is a minor), any risk that the sanctioned person poses in the future and any other factors considered relevant by the Judicial Committee.

11. Appeals

11.1. An Appeal may be lodged against a Decision of the Judicial Committee in accordance with World Rugby Regulation 20.

Information

- A helpful list of services providing support and information international is available here: [Getting Help | Safe Sport International](#)
- World Rugby will process personal data in accordance with the [World Rugby Privacy Statement](#)
- This Policy has been approved by World Rugby's management team and noted by World Rugby Council as at 13 May 2022. It will be reviewed on an ad hoc basis as required and, in any event, every two years by World Rugby's legal team.

Appendix 1

Incident Report Form

This Safeguarding Incident Report Form may be used to provide information to World Rugby in relation to potential safeguarding concern(s).

This form should be returned by email to the following address:

confidential@world.rugby

Please provide as much information as you can/wish to. Please note that anonymous reporting is possible but may restrict or prevent the proper investigation of incidents);

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of the person completing this form: | |
| | |
| Date and time of completing this form: | |
| | |
| Your position or relationship to the person(s) about whom you are raising this safeguarding concern: | |
| | |
| Your e-mail address: | |
| | |
| Your Address and Phone number: | |
| | |
| Name(s) of person(s) to whom the safeguarding concern or incident relates: | |

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|---|--|
| | |
| Address (if known) of person(s) about whom you are raising this safeguarding concern: | |
| | |
| Telephone number (if known) of person(s) about whom you are raising this safeguarding concern: | |
| | |
| Age and Date of Birth of alleged victim (if known and any other information relevant to the report (e.g., gender, ethnicity, any disability etc): | |
| | |
| Facts about the incident: What have you seen or heard (please include dates, times, places etc) | |
| | |
| What has the alleged victim/person reporting the concern said to you about this issue? (please continue on another sheet if required) | |
| | |
| Any other relevant information: | |
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| Action taken so far: | |
| | |
| | |
| Public agencies contacted (please complete below): | |
| | |
| Police - yes/no | |
| | |
| Name and contact number: | |
| | |
| Details of advice received: | |
| | |
| Child/Adult Protection service - yes/ no | |
| | |
| Which? | |
| | |
| Name and contact number: | |
| | |

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|-----------------------------|--|
| Details of advice received: | |
| | |
| Local Authority - yes/no | |
| | |
| Which? | |
| | |
| Name and contact number: | |
| | |
| Details of advice received: | |
| | |
| Other - yes/no | |
| | |
| Which? | |
| | |
| Name and contact number: | |
| | |
| Details of advice received: | |

| | |
|------------|--|
| | |
| Signature: | |
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Appendix 2

Safeguarding: Summary of Procedures

