

## Stornoway RFC

### Child Protection Policy

#### CHILD PROTECTION AND GOOD PRACTICE POLICY STATEMENT

Stornoway Rugby Football Club recognises that all those involved in the coaching or supervision of children associated with the club have a duty to safeguard the welfare of those children. This duty extends to the prevention of physical; sexual or emotional abuse of children associated with the Club and shall be applied regardless of a child's sex, race or religion.

The Club's Child Protection Officer (Club CPO) is Iain GG Campbell (07896 751783).

A copy of the CHILD PROTECTION AND GOOD PRACTICE document is available from either of the above named club officials or from the Club Secretary (secretary@stornowayrfc.org.uk).

#### The Coach - Athlete Relationship

Coaches- particularly of children - hold a powerful and unique leadership role, often carrying considerable authority and status. A closeness and mutual trust often accompany this role usually only held between parent and child. Coaches often unwittingly or wittingly assume this power and authority, and occasionally this influence spills over into a child's personal life. One of the challenges coaches repeatedly face is how to manage this potential power and balance the responsible and safe boundary between coach and performer. The challenge to do this is exacerbated by the need for coaches to build high levels of trust from children - particularly those involved in elite performance - to encourage them to change their behaviour to develop the level of commitment required to achieve their potential.

Coaches of young children start by using their authority role to build a strong relationship or bond. Over time this hopefully positive influence can grow to be extremely strong and it is from this influence that trust grows.

Where trust is given, there exists the potential for the abuse and misuse of power by a coach. This may be as a result of thoughtlessness, negligence or occasionally wickedness. Even the passive abuse of power by a coach e.g. by questioning loyalty or commitment, may produce a dangerous level of conformity and emotional dependency in a child.

By seeking conformity and commitment to their own values and ideals, coaches may be exaggerating the need to conform at the price of the child's own personal development, self-determination and independence. All coaches should be able to recognise the negative consequences of the power they may hold and the trust placed in them, by children and parents.

#### COACHES CHARTER

- Coaches must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every player and treat everyone equally within the context of our sport.
- Coaches must place the wellbeing and safety of the performer above the development of performance. They should follow all guidelines laid down by the Scottish Rugby Union and be registered on the SRU coaches' database.
- Coaches must develop an appropriate working relationship with players based on mutual trust and respect.
- Coaches must not exert any undue influence to gain any personal benefit or reward.
- Coaches must encourage and guide players to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance.
- Coaches must ensure the activities they direct or advocate are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the individual.
- Coaches should at the outset clarify with players (and where appropriate their parents) exactly

what is expected of them and what players are entitled to expect of their coach.

- Coaches should co-operate fully with other specialists (e.g. other coaches, physiotherapists, club officials' etc.) in the best interest of the player.
- Coaches should always advocate the positive aspects of Rugby and never condone rule violations or the use of prohibited substances.
- Coaches must respect a player's right to his or her own personal development, independence and self-determination.
- Coaches must consistently display high standards of behaviour and appearance.
- Coaches must be prepared to complete our club's "Children's Coach Registration Form" and follow the procedures laid down by the Club.

## PROCEDURES FOR COACHES

- All coaches shall comply with the Coaches Charter.
- All coaches shall complete the Club's "Child's Coach Registration Form".
- All new coaches / organisers will be made aware of our policy on Child Protection and Good Practice.
- Coaches shall follow the guidelines issued on how to deal with the disclosure or suspicion of abuse.
- Coaches shall know who their Club Child Protection Officer is.
- All activities shall be planned to minimise situations in which abuse may occur.
- The coaches shall observe the following guides to good practice:
  - Follow an open door policy in changing rooms and showers.
  - Prohibit the use of camcorders and cameras in changing rooms and showers.
  - Allow parents access to changing areas when appropriate.
  - Do not participate in one to one coaching other than during a normal coaching session and always in the presence of other coaches and players.
  - Do not allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
  - Do not make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child, even in fun.
  - Do not refer to a child's ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, or sexuality in a way that is derogatory. Do not allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
  - Do not engage in sexually provocative games or horseplay.
  - Do not do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.
- Immediately report incidents of inappropriate language, behaviour or abuse by another Coach.
- Immediately report incidents of inappropriate language, behaviour or abuse by a child.
- Parents shall be encouraged to attend matches and coaching sessions and to accept responsibility for ensuring their child's safety.
- A Good Conduct Guide for spectators and parents will be distributed with fixture list at the start of the season and to new members.
- A current membership list or appropriate checklist shall be available at all activities.
- An appropriate first aid kit (coaches shall not attempt to treat injuries unless qualified to do so) to be on hand at all activities.
- An Incident Book shall always be on hand to record incidents that may have repercussions for the club, coach or player.
- Whilst at coaching/ home fixtures and travelling to away fixtures etc. children will be kept under the closest supervision and, when appropriate, a "Stay Behind" coach will be nominated.
- Coaches shall not meet children away from the Rugby Club situation or meeting place without a parent or other adult being present.

## **Procedures to be followed by coaches where Abuse is disclosed or suspected.**

### **Create a safe environment by:**

- Staying calm and not rushing into actions which may be inappropriate.
  - Confirming you know how difficult it must have been to confide in you.
  - Reassuring the child and stressing he/she is not to blame.
  - Listening to and believing what the child says; show you are taking the matter seriously.
  - Be honest and do not make promises you cannot keep. Explain you may have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening.
  - Be clear about what the child says so that it can be passed on to child protection professionals.
- Keep questions to a minimum and avoid closed questions (i.e. ones that can be answered by a single word e.g. yes/no). Use open questions to encourage the child to use his/her own words. Do not lead the child, or suggest words or ideas on what may have happened.

### **Record:**

- What the child has said to you, in a legible and accurate format, in the Incident Book.
- Facts and observations, not your opinion.
- The child's name, address, date of birth.
- The date and time of the incident
- Exactly what the child said and what you said
- Actions taken and contact with parents/agencies. Remember names, addresses and phone numbers.

### **Ensure:**

- You date and sign the record.
- The Club CPO witnesses the record.
- You maintain confidentiality; breaches of confidentiality can be very damaging to the child, family and any child protection investigations that take place.
- You do not take sole responsibility. Consult with the Club CPO or another coach as soon as possible, so that you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself in a difficult situation.
- You do not contact parents if you consider the child to be a victim of sexual abuse or at increased risk.

## **Procedures to be followed by the Club where abuse is disclosed or suspected.**

- The coach/concerned person shall conform to the Procedures to be followed by coaches where abuse is disclosed or suspected. If the child is in immediate danger call Police Scotland on 999.
- If you are the Club CPO, contact Scottish Rugby Child Protection team for advice (Tel: 0131 346 5168) and consult the appropriate agencies: i.e. Social Work Department, (Tel: 0845 600 7090), Local Police (Tel: 01851 702222)
- The Club CPO will obtain the names and phone numbers of those consulted.
- The Club CPO will follow the advice given by the appropriate agencies.
- The Club CPO shall inform the Club's Chairman, Mr Colin Maciver that an incident has occurred and of the action taken.
- Coaches must be aware that they are not Childcare professionals and that the procedures set down are to be followed immediately they suspect abuse to have taken place. It is the role of the professional childcare protection agencies to investigate.

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**May 2018**