



Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) 25-27

Through the IRFU, the IRFU Ulster Branch (Ulster Rugby, 'the club') provides rugby activities to young people through support to affiliated clubs and schools, participation in mini and youth coaching, competitions and participation programmes in related schools and/or the community. The club 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 (known as age-grade players). The club will adhere to the IRFU Safeguarding Policy, which strives to respect the dignity and rights of age-grade players.

The club will strive 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 is available through the Branch Welfare Officer (**Kerry Spence**). Sport Ireland and Sport NI safeguarding guidance should be used where the IRFU has not published specific guidelines, in particular with regard to the principles that safeguard children from harm, <https://www.sportireland.ie/ethics/safeguarding-sport> or <https://www.sportni.net/about-us/safeguarding/>

The club has 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 to manage these risks. The written risk assessment and the procedures for managing these risks is available in the full version of this statement (virtual or printed version).

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements of the IRFU and under the Children First Act 2015 and in Northern Ireland, the Safeguarding in Sport Standards for NI. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the club adheres to the following procedures that are in place as part of the IRFU Safeguarding Policy and our intention to safeguard children:

- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children, <https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/recruitment/>
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm, <https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/training/>
- 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: **Stephen Gore, safeguarding@irfu.ie**. The Branch Welfare Officer (**Kerry Spence**) is the Relevant Person as per Children First Act. Other staff and volunteers within the club may hold the role and responsibility of a Mandated Person as per Schedule 2 of the Act but have not been appointed by the club/IRFU. They are always

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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 towards a child availing of our service can be found in the Case Management Policy, <https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/concerns/>
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person for the purposes of the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement
- Procedures to minimise risk of harm to 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, <https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/>

The club management expects those involved within age-grade rugby to adopt and supervise the implementation of these safeguarding principles and standards. The club recognises that implementation is an ongoing process. It is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and accompanying IRFU Safeguarding Policy and procedures to keep children involved in rugby safe from harm. We will do this through the implementation of the Club Action Plan (part of the Club Safeguarding Guide) which is audited annually.

<https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/best-practice/> Club Welfare Officer, Club Safeguarding Guide

A link to the IRFU Safeguarding Policy is included in relevant club documentation and is available here, <https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/safeguarding-policy/> Coaches and volunteers 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 from the Branch Welfare Officer, <https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/>

The club will work with the IRFU National Safeguarding Officer on the implementation of the policy. The Branch Welfare Officer is available to assist Club Welfare Officers and related personnel and to deal with club queries. They can be contacted at: Kerry Spence – kerry.spence@ulsterrugby.com

The Branch Welfare Officer has completed relevant safeguarding training. Their ID templates are on display on the Ulster Rugby website. The club has completed the necessary risk assessment and published the Child Safeguarding Statement. The club follows the Club Safeguarding Guide, the Anti-bullying Statement and uses a range of other IRFU resources as appropriate. Coaches and volunteers have also received relevant training through the IRFU.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed in **September 2027**, 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, **Kerry Spence**, [Kerry.spence@ulsterrugby.com](mailto:kerry.spence@ulsterrugby.com)

Signed:
Chair



Signed:
Branch Welfare Officer



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Safeguarding Risk Assessment 25-27

This risk assessment considers the potential for harm to come to children whilst they are in the care of this club 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 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 2015, 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 Safeguarding in Sport Standards for NI and as such can be used by the IRFU's constituent Provinces and clubs.*

The list of risks identified and procedures to manage these risks are listed in relevant categories overleaf and are based on the IRFU Club Safeguarding Guide.

Responsibilities

- The IRFU Ulster Branch (Ulster Rugby, 'the club') has **appointed a Branch Welfare Officer** to implement the Child Safeguarding Statement and IRFU Safeguarding Policy and to monitor the implementation of the associated Club Safeguarding Guide
- The Branch Welfare Officer holds the role of Relevant Person for the organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement and links with the nationally appointed Mandated Person of the IRFU
- This risk assessment has been completed with the Branch Welfare Officer and other members of the Rugby Committee
- The Committee recorded this risk assessment at the September 2025 club 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 minis or youths, 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 their contact is listed in the Child Safeguarding Statement
- The Child Safeguarding Statement and related policies are available to parents and the public through the Branch Welfare Officer

This document was completed by the Branch Welfare Officer on behalf of the Rugby Committee and approved by the Committee in September 2025. On completion of this the club will now complete and publish the Child Safeguarding Statement signed by Officers of the Club.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan Egner".

Alan Egner
Signed by Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kerry Spence".

Kerry Spence
Signed by Branch Welfare Officer

The Risk Assessment was undertaken in September 2025 and will be reviewed in September 2027 in line with updated Safeguarding Policies

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The prevention of harm requires both awareness and practical implementation of the policies and procedures listed below put in place to manage risks identified by IRFU to keep children safe from harm as defined in legislation.

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 U18 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 Rugby Connect) • Risk of harm if Codes of Conduct for age-grade players and parents are not 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 procedures for travel and away trips • Risk of harm, including online, through bullying and inappropriate use of social media if club procedures are not made known to coaches, volunteers, age-grade players and parents 	<p>High</p>	<p>Safeguarding Policy https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/safeguarding-policy/</p> <p>Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) Club template available https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/best-practice/Club Welfare Officer, Child Safeguarding Statement</p> <p>Codes of Conduct https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/best-practice/Club Guidance, Codes of Conduct</p> <p>Bullying Club template available https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/best-practice/Club Welfare Officer, Anti-Bullying Statement</p> <p>Images https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/best-practice/Club Guidance, Images</p> <p>Overnight trip/tours https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/best-practice/Club Guidance, Trips & Tour Checklist</p> <p>These policies have been made known to those working with age-grade players and are available through registration process for parents</p>	<p>CSS and Codes of Conduct on display on website & circulated to staff & relevant volunteers in Sept 2025</p> <p>Information sessions through clubs to parents, coaches and members, includes Codes of Conduct</p> <p>Anti-bullying Statement is on display on website</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"> • Risk of harm if Child Safeguarding Statement and safeguarding policies are not communicated to all stakeholders so there is high awareness of safeguarding information • Risk of harm if Branch WO & CWOs ID template is not visible and communicated to age-grade players, parents and volunteers so contact can be made if harm is identified • Risk of harm if safeguarding information is not made available on sign up so that parents and players know standards of behaviour • Risk of harm if player medical/behavioural information is not shared with relevant coaches as highlighted in the Club Safeguarding Guide 	High	<p>Safeguarding Policy IRFU Safeguarding 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>Clubs required to publish their own Child Safeguarding Statement following completion of this risk assessment</p> <p>Codes of Conduct https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/best-practice/Club Guidance, Codes of Conduct</p> <p>CWO ID Template Distributed through Spirit of Rugby Officers to CWOs</p> <p>Club Safeguarding Guide https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/best-practice/Club Welfare Officer, Club Safeguarding Guide</p> <p>Other Safeguarding Information A wide range of safeguarding information is available through the IRFU website and clubs should draw attention to these on an ongoing basis https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/</p>	<p>CSS, Codes of Conduct & CWO ID Template on display on website & circulated to staff & relevant volunteers in Sept 2025</p> <p>Sharing of information on an ongoing basis</p>

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Risk Identified: Recruitment	Level	Procedures in Place	Monitoring of Risk
<p>Risk of recruiting inappropriate people to work with young people</p> <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of harm if the Branch WO & CWOs have not been vetted and trained to SG2 standard • Risk of harm if all relevant age-grade coaches and volunteers have not successfully completed the necessary vetting requirements • Risk of harm if all relevant age-grade coaches and volunteers have not signed the Declaration of Intent (DOI) that clearly outlines their role • Risk of harm if age-grade sections have not put in place adequate supervision in accordance with IRFU Safeguarding Policy and best practice guidelines • Risk of harm if copies of references for visiting/unknown coaches, if applicable, are not sought 	High	<p>Club Safeguarding Guide https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/best-practice/ <i>Club Welfare Officer, Club Safeguarding Guide, Section 3</i></p> <p>Recruitment Policy https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/recruitment/Documentation, Spirit of Rugby Vetting Policy</p> <p>Audit of RugbyConnect for outstanding vets should be carried out, at least weekly, by the Branch WO and ongoing support for same in clubs.</p> <p>Branch WO to communicate with CWOs & relevant staff regarding adequate supervision levels according to guidelines, https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/best-practice/Coach Practices, Supervision and Safety</p> <p>Branch WO to ensure CWOs & relevant staff are aware of the need to take up references for visiting/unknown coaches</p>	Vetting and DOI renewals every 3-years through Rugby Connect, Branch WO has access to confirm coach/volunteer has completed their vetting

Risk Identified: General	Level	Procedures in Place	Monitoring of Risk
<p>Risk of untrained people working with young people</p> <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of harm if Branch WO & CWOs have not completed all necessary safeguarding training 	High	<p>Training Requirements https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/training/ and Club Safeguarding Guide https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/best-practice/Club Welfare Officer, Club Safeguarding Guide</p>	Training completed every 3-years through Gainline and recorded on Rugby Connect

Risk Identified: General	Level	Procedures in Place	Monitoring of Risk
<p>Risk of untrained people working with young people (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of harm (physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect) against a child by a staff/volunteer/child if relevant staff, coaches and volunteers have not completed appropriate safeguarding training • Risk of harm if coaches working with age-grade players are not appropriately trained for the level of rugby they are coaching 	High	<p>Spirit of Rugby Officers send out link to online training, through CWOs.</p> <p>https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/coaching/coaching-courses/</p>	<p>Branch WO & CWOs have access to confirm completion</p> <p>Coaches training/qualification recorded in Gainline and Rugby Connect</p>

Risk Identified: Complaints/Concerns	Level	Procedures in Place	Monitoring of Risk
<p>Risk of harm if complaints and reporting procedures are not in place</p> <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of harm (physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect) against a child by a coach/volunteer/child if reporting procedure not known • Risk of harm if the name of Branch & National Safeguarding Person is not listed and visible within club • Risk of harm if the IRFU Mandated Person is not listed on the CSS • Risk of harm if parents do not know how to raise a concern • Risk of harm if age-grade members cannot make their concerns known • Risk of harm if Coaches/Volunteers do not know how to deal with complaints and raise a concern using Safeguarding Incident Report Form and/or contact with Spirit of Rugby Officer 	<p>High</p> <p>Med</p> <p>Med</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p>	<p>Reporting Procedures https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/concerns/</p> <p>CWO ID Template Distributed through Spirit of Rugby Officers to CWOs</p> <p>Lists names and contact details for Branch & National Safeguarding Persons</p> <p>Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) Club template available https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/best-practice/Club Welfare Officer, Child Safeguarding Statement</p> <p>Parents information https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/parents-guardians/</p> <p>Young People rights and reporting procedures https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/young-people/</p>	<p>CSS & CWO ID Template on display on website & circulated to staff & relevant volunteers in Sept 2025</p> <p>Information sessions via clubs to parents, coaches and members, includes reporting process</p> <p>Sharing of information on an ongoing basis</p>

Risk Identified: Complaints/ Concerns	Level	Procedures in Place	Monitoring of Risk
<p>Risk of harm if complaints and reporting procedures are not in place (contd)</p> <p>Risk of harm when using facilities</p> <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of harm if hiring facilities and the squad/club have not checked that appropriate safeguarding procedures have been put in place • Risk of harm if others are hiring club facilities and the club have not checked that appropriate safeguarding procedures have been put in place • Risk of harm if Anti-bullying Statement is not made available to all • Risk of harm if appropriate medical procedures are not in place at the facility 	High	<p>Case Management Process & Safeguarding Incident Report Form https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/concerns/</p> <p>Hiring facilities Coach/club member hiring facility to request CSS and/or safeguarding policy, along with anti-bullying statement and CWO ID templates. Same should be requested for anyone hiring club facilities</p> <p>Bullying Club template available https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/best-practice/Club Welfare Officer, Anti-Bullying Statement</p> <p>Medical Procedures https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/medical/</p>	<p>Copies retained</p> <p>The Anti-bullying statement should be on display and distributed to children and parents at camps, etc.</p>