



Barkers' Butts RFC Safeguarding Children Policy

**Updated in line with the RFU Safeguarding Children Policy 2026
and RFU Regulation 21**

1. Policy Statement

Barkers' Butts RFC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people who participate in rugby and club activities.

The welfare of the child is paramount in all decisions and actions taken by the club. Every child has the right to participate in rugby in a safe, positive, inclusive and enjoyable environment, free from abuse, neglect, exploitation and poor practice.

This policy applies to:

- All players under the age of 18.
- Coaches, volunteers, committee members and officials.
- Parents, carers and spectators.
- Anyone acting on behalf of the club.

Barkers' Butts RFC fully adopts and supports the RFU Safeguarding Children Policy, RFU Safeguarding Handbook, RFU Regulation 21 and all associated safeguarding guidance.

2. Our Safeguarding Principles

Guided by the RFU Core Values of Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship, Barkers' Butts RFC is committed to:

Ensuring the welfare of children is paramount.

- Listening to children and taking their views seriously.
- Creating an environment where everyone feels safe and able to speak up.
- Treating all children fairly and with dignity and respect.
- Promoting safe, positive and enjoyable rugby experiences.
- Taking all safeguarding concerns seriously.
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and statutory agencies.



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- Ensuring that individuals working with children are suitably recruited, vetted and trained.
 - Responding promptly, effectively and proportionately to safeguarding concerns.
 - Continually reviewing and improving safeguarding practice throughout the club.
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3. Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility

Everyone involved in rugby has a responsibility to help keep children safe.

All children, parents, volunteers, coaches, officials, spectators and committee members are expected to:

- Remain vigilant to safeguarding concerns.
- Challenge behaviour which may place children at risk.
- Report concerns, allegations or suspicions without delay.
- Support an open culture where concerns can be raised safely.
- Follow this policy and all relevant RFU guidance.

No safeguarding concern is too small to report.

4. Club Safeguarding Contacts

Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO)

Kate Marsh

 07967 043920

 kvsparkes@hotmail.co.uk

Deputy Safeguarding Officers

Joanne Lawson

 07879 267418



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Sarah Wilson

 07947 191788

If the concern relates to a Safeguarding Officer

Contact:

Minis and Juniors Chairman

David Medcraft

 07921 211157

RFU Safeguarding Team

 safeguarding@rfu.com

Local Safeguarding Contacts

Coventry Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

 024 7678 8555

 mash@coventry.gov.uk

Police

Emergency: 999

Non-emergency: 101

NSPCC Helpline

 0808 800 5000

 www.nspcc.org.uk



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5. Responding to Immediate Risk

If a child is in immediate danger, requires urgent medical attention, or a crime is in progress:

Call 999 immediately. Do not assume somebody else will take action.

Following emergency action:

1. Inform the Club Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.
2. CSO to make a referral to the RFU Safeguarding Team.
3. Record the facts of the incident as soon as practical.
4. Cooperate with any statutory agency enquiries.

Any member, volunteer or coach can make an emergency referral where necessary.

6. Child Voice and Participation

Barkers' Butts RFC recognises the importance of listening to children and young people.

We will:

- Encourage children to express their views.
 - Take concerns raised by children seriously.
 - Ensure children know who they can speak to if they feel worried or unsafe.
 - Consider children's wishes and feelings when responding to safeguarding concerns wherever appropriate.
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7. Recognising Abuse

Abuse may occur inside or outside the family, in person or online, and may be perpetrated by adults or children.

The four main categories of abuse are:

Physical Abuse



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Deliberately causing physical harm, including hitting, shaking, burning, poisoning, drowning, suffocating or fabricating illness.

Emotional Abuse

Persistent emotional maltreatment (or exposure to the abuse of others) which adversely affects a child's emotional development, including humiliation, intimidation, isolation, bullying and exposure to domestic abuse.

Sexual Abuse

Forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity, either physically or online. This includes grooming, inappropriate sexual behaviour and exploitation.

Neglect

Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or emotional needs, resulting in impairment of health or development.

8. Child-on-Child Abuse

The club recognises that children can harm other children. All concerns will be taken seriously and managed appropriately.

Examples include:

- Bullying.
- Cyberbullying.
- Physical abuse.
- Sexual harassment.
- Sexual violence.
- Harmful sexual behaviour.
- Initiation activities or rituals.
- Sharing inappropriate images



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Any concerns relating to child-on-child abuse must be reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer immediately.

9. Online Safety

The club recognises that safeguarding concerns can arise online as well as face-to-face.

All members should:

- Use social media responsibly.
 - Maintain professional boundaries.
 - Avoid private one-to-one electronic communication with children wherever possible.
 - Ensure group communication includes parents where appropriate.
 - Follow RFU photography and social media guidance.
 - Report concerns relating to online abuse, grooming, bullying or exploitation.
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10. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

If anybody is concerned about a child:

Do

- Listen carefully.
- Stay calm.
- Reassure the child they have done the right thing.
- Record what has been said using the child's own words where possible.
- Contact the Club Safeguarding Officer promptly.

Do Not

- Promise confidentiality.



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- Investigate the concern yourself.
- Ask leading questions.
- Confront the alleged perpetrator.
- Delay reporting.

All concerns, allegations, suspicions and disclosures will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately.

11. Low-Level Concerns and Poor Practice

Not all concerns will meet the threshold for abuse; however, poor practice can still place children at risk.

Examples include:

- Inappropriate language.
- Favouritism.
- Failure to maintain professional boundaries.
- Unsupervised contact with children.
- Inappropriate use of social media.
- Breaches of RFU Codes of Conduct.

All low-level concerns should be reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer and recorded.

Patterns of poor practice may indicate a wider safeguarding concern and will be reviewed accordingly.

12. Safeguarding Records and Information Sharing

Safeguarding information will be:

- Recorded promptly, accurately and factually.



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- Stored securely and confidentially.
- Shared only with individuals who need the information to safeguard children.
- Managed in accordance with data protection requirements and RFU guidance.

Confidentiality should never prevent information being shared where a child may be suffering or at risk of suffering harm.

13. Recruitment, Vetting and Training

The club will ensure that adults working with children are suitable and appropriately supported.

This includes:

- RFU DBS checks where required.
- Identity verification.
- Appropriate references where applicable.
- Role descriptions.
- Safeguarding training.
- Ongoing monitoring and support.

Any volunteer who becomes subject to a criminal or police investigation must inform the Club Safeguarding Officer immediately so that relevant RFU safeguarding processes can be considered.

14. Regulation 15 - Playing Up and Playing Down

Players may participate in adult rugby from their 17th birthday only where all RFU Regulation 15 requirements are met. These include:

- Appropriate assessment of readiness.
- Completion of all required RFU forms.



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- Constituent Body approval.
- Compliance with all restrictions relating to front-row participation.

Where players participate outside their age grade, all applicable Regulation 15 requirements and RFU approval processes must be followed.

15. Changing Rooms and Supervision

The welfare, privacy and dignity of children must be respected at all times.

- Children will be supervised appropriately.
- Adults must not change in the same facilities as children.
- Appropriate supervision arrangements will be implemented.
- Any safeguarding concerns arising in changing facilities must be reported immediately.

16. Behaviour and Codes of Conduct

All members must behave in accordance with:

- RFU Core Values.
- RFU Codes of Conduct.
- Barkers' Butts RFC Codes of Conduct.
- Relevant RFU Regulations.

The following are unacceptable:

- Humiliating or degrading children.
- Unnecessary physical contact.
- Being alone with a child where avoidable.
- Providing alcohol to children.



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- Smoking whilst supervising children and allowing underage drinking.
 - Inappropriate use of power or authority.
 - Sharing sexualised comments, images or materials.
 - Entering into intimate relationships with children.
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17. Events, Tours and Overnight Activities

All club activities, events and tours involving children must comply with RFU safeguarding requirements.

Where required:

- A written safeguarding plan will be completed.
 - Risk assessments will be undertaken.
 - Appropriate supervision ratios will be maintained.
 - Emergency procedures will be established.
 - Parents will receive appropriate information and consent arrangements.
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18. Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

The club recognises parents and carers as key safeguarding partners.

Where appropriate, concerns will be discussed with parents unless doing so:

- Places a child at further risk.
- Compromises a police investigation.
- Compromises a children's services investigation.

The child's welfare will always remain the overriding consideration.



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19. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, following any significant safeguarding incident, or when changes are made to RFU safeguarding regulations or national safeguarding guidance.

Safeguarding Promise

Barkers' Butts RFC is committed to ensuring that every child who plays, watches, volunteers or participates in rugby at our club feels safe, is listened to and can enjoy rugby in a positive, inclusive and supportive environment.

The welfare of the child is paramount.

Policy Owner: Club Safeguarding Officer

Date Approved: August 2026

Review Date: August 2027

Based on: RFU Safeguarding Children Policy 2026, RFU Safeguarding Handbook and RFU Regulation 21.