



## CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

Through the IRFU & related Branch, Leinster Rugby, Portlaoise RFC provides rugby activities to young people through participation in mini and youth coaching and 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. 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 Club Welfare Officer, Aoife Reilly

. The Sports Councils' Code of Ethics/Safeguarding Guidance should be used where the IRFU has not published specific guidelines, in particular with regard to the principles to safeguard children from harm, <https://www.sportireland.ie/ethics/safeguarding-guidance-for-children-and-young-people-in-sport>

The club 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 required to manage these risks. The written risk assessment and the procedures for managing these risks is available at the end of this statement.

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 Club Framework for Safeguarding Standards. 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, <http://www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/development/safeguarding/recruitment.php>
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm, <http://www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/development/safeguarding/training.php>
- 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. The Club Welfare Officer **Aoife Reilly** 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 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.

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- Procedure for the management of allegation of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service and can be found in the case management policy, <http://www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/development/safeguarding/concerns.php>
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person for the purposes of the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement
- Procedures to minimise risk of harm of 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, <http://www.irishrugby.ie/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 safeguarding policy and procedures to keep children involved in rugby safe from harm. We will do this through the implementation of the Club Safeguarding Guide and IRFU safeguarding audit, created the Club Action Plan in 2016 and audits clubs annually in accordance with this plan, <https://d19fc3vd0jo3m.cloudfront.net/irfu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/14123920/Club-Safeguarding-Guide.pdf>

A link to the IRFU Safeguarding Policy is included in relevant club documentation and is available here, at [portlaoisrugbyclub.com/club-welfare](http://portlaoisrugbyclub.com/club-welfare) 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 Club Welfare Officer, <https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/>

The club will work with the Branch Spirit of Rugby Officer on the implementation of the policy and are available to assist Club Welfare Officers and related personnel and to deal with club queries. They can be contacted at:

- Leinster: Billy Phelan – [Billy.phelan@leinsterrugby.ie](mailto:Billy.phelan@leinsterrugby.ie)

Club Welfare Officers have completed relevant safeguarding training. Their ID templates are on display within club grounds and/or club websites. 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, uses the club pavement signs and Spirit of Rugby 'Let Them Play' video clips. Coaches and volunteers have also received training in vetting and safeguarding through the IRFU. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed in September 2025, 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, Aoife Reilly 086 3529575 email; [eefreilly22203@gmail.com](mailto:eefreilly22203@gmail.com) Club Welfare Officer

Signed:  
Chair

John Brennan

Signed:  
Club Welfare Officer

Aoife Reilly

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# SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT

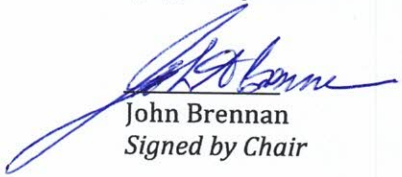
This risk assessment considers the potential for harm to come to children whilst they are in the care of this club and gives the required policy, guidance or process documents required to alleviate these risks. This risk assessment has been carried out prior to the publication of the Child Safeguarding 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 Club Framework for Safeguarding Standards in Sport and as such can be used by the IRFU's constituent Provinces and clubs.

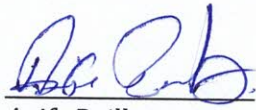
The risk assessment indicates the areas of potential risk of harm, the likelihood of the risk occurring, and gives the required policy, guidance or process documents required to alleviate these risks. *The list of risks identified and procedures to manage these risks are listed in relevant categories overleaf and are based on the IRFU Safeguarding Guide.*

## Responsibilities

- The club has appointed a **Club Welfare Officer** to implement the Child Safeguarding Statement and IRFU Safeguarding Policy and to monitor the implementation of the associated Safeguarding Guide
- The Club 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 Club Welfare Officer and other members of Club Committee
- The Committee recorded this risk assessment at the October 2023 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 CSS and related policies are available to parents and the public through the Club Welfare Officer

*This document was completed by the Club Welfare Officer on behalf of the Club Committee and approved by the Committee in October 2023. On completion of this the club will now complete and publish the Child Safeguarding Statement signed by Officers of the Club*

  
John Brennan  
Signed by Chair

  
Aoife Reilly  
Signed by Club Welfare Officer

*The Risk Assessment was undertaken in 17th of Oct 23 and will be reviewed in September 2025 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 Assessment**

Risk Identified: Club and Coaching Practices	Level	Procedures in Place	Monitoring of Risk
<p><b>Risk if relevant staff and volunteers are not aware of the safeguarding policy as it relates to club and coaching practices</b></p> <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of harm if there is not a <b>consent form</b> for each player U-18 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)</li> <li>• <b>Codes of Conduct</b> for age-grade players and parents published and/or on view</li> <li>• Risk of harm if staff and volunteers do not know policies in relation to <b>supervision, social media and photographs</b></li> <li>• Risk of harm if staff and volunteers are not aware of <b>travel and away trips</b> procedures</li> <li>• Risk of harm of abuse, including <b>online</b>, through <b>bullying</b> and inappropriate use of social media</li> </ul> <p>These policies have been made known to those working with Age-grade players and available through registration process for parents</p>	High	<p><b>Safeguarding Policy</b> - <a href="https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/safeguarding-policy/">https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/safeguarding-policy/</a></p> <p><b>Codes of Conduct</b> - <a href="https://d19fc3vd0ojo3m.cloudfront.net/irfu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/16153845/Code-of-Conduct-Parents.pdf">https://d19fc3vd0ojo3m.cloudfront.net/irfu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/16153845/Code-of-Conduct-Parents.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Bullying</b> <a href="https://d19fc3vd0ojo3m.cloudfront.net/irfu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/31120508/Anti-Bullying-Statement.pdf">https://d19fc3vd0ojo3m.cloudfront.net/irfu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/31120508/Anti-Bullying-Statement.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Social media guidance</b> - <a href="https://d19fc3vd0ojo3m.cloudfront.net/irfu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/31120545/Stay-Safer-Online.pdf">https://d19fc3vd0ojo3m.cloudfront.net/irfu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/31120545/Stay-Safer-Online.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Travel guidance</b> - including hosting and away trips <a href="https://d19fc3vd0ojo3m.cloudfront.net/irfu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/25120840/Travel-touring-hosting.pdf">https://d19fc3vd0ojo3m.cloudfront.net/irfu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/25120840/Travel-touring-hosting.pdf</a></p>	<p>CSS and Codes on display at event / in clubhouse and on Website</p> <p>Information sessions to parents, coaches and members, includes codes of conducts</p> <p>Anti-bullying statement is on display – is circulated and on display in clubhouse</p>

Risk Identified: Communication	Level	Procedures in Place	Monitoring of Risk
<p><b>Risk of harm if not communicating with staff, volunteers, parents and players</b></p> <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Safeguarding Statement and safeguarding policies communicated to members and staff so there is high awareness of safeguarding information</li> <li>• CWO ID template visible and communicated to parents and volunteers so contact can be made if harm is identified</li> <li>• Safeguarding information made available on sign up so that parents and players know standards of behaviour</li> </ul>	High	<p>IRFU Policy and Child Safeguarding Statement visible on website and available to all parents on registration process - <a href="https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/safeguarding-policy/">https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/safeguarding-policy/</a></p> <p>ID template distributed to Spirit staff and made available to CWOs</p> <p>Policy is available through Rugby Connect membership registration</p>	CWO ID template on website



Risk Identified: Recruitment	Level	Procedures in Place	Monitoring
<p><b>Risk of recruiting inappropriate people to work with young people</b></p> <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a CWO that is vetted and trained to SG2 standard</li> <li>• All relevant <b>Age-Grade coaches and volunteers</b> successfully completed the necessary vetting requirements</li> <li>• All relevant Age-grade volunteers signed Declarations of Intent that clearly outlines their role</li> <li>• Age-grade section have put in place adequate <b>supervision</b> processes in accordance with IRFU Safeguarding Policy</li> <li>• Copies of reference for visiting / unknown coaches if applicable are sought</li> </ul>	<p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p>	<p><b>Recruitment Policy</b>,  <a href="https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/recruitment/">https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/recruitment/</a></p> <p>Audit of Rugby Connect for outstanding <b> vets</b> weekly, emails Spirit of Rugby Officer as necessary for update.</p> <p>CWO to check with head coaches that adequate <b>supervision</b> is in place according to guidelines,  <a href="https://d19fc3vd0ojo3m.cloudfront.net/irfu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/25120828/Supervision-Safety.pdf">https://d19fc3vd0ojo3m.cloudfront.net/irfu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/25120828/Supervision-Safety.pdf</a></p>	<p>Vetting and DoI renewals every 2-years through Rugby Connect, CWO has access to confirm coach/volunteer has completed their vet</p>

Risk Identified: Complaints / Concerns	Level	Procedures in Place	Monitoring
<p><b>Risk of harm if complaints and reporting procedures are not in place</b></p> <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Risk of harm (physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect) of a child by a coach/volunteer/child</b> if reporting procedure not known</li> <li>• Name of Branch &amp; National Safeguarding Person is listed and visible within club</li> <li>• The IRFU Mandated Person is listed on the CSS</li> <li>• Parents know how to raise a concern</li> <li>• Age-grade member can make their concerns known</li> <li>• Coaches/Volunteers know how to deal with complaints and raise a concern using case management form and/or contact with Spirit of Rugby Officer</li> </ul>	<p>High</p> <p>Med</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>Med</p> <p>Med</p>	<p><b>Reporting Procedures -</b>  <a href="https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/concerns/">https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/concerns/</a></p> <p><b>Parents information -</b>  <a href="https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/parents-guardians/">https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/parents-guardians/</a></p> <p><b>Case Management Reporting Form</b>  <a href="https://forms.office.com/FormsPro/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=JRVazqodokKeM5uIrGDeIERAZC3HTJNIFmj9hBUz8ZUMlVSjQxNjEzUTQ4MFRRMVBIOVpXSTBGUi4u">https://forms.office.com/FormsPro/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=JRVazqodokKeM5uIrGDeIERAZC3HTJNIFmj9hBUz8ZUMlVSjQxNjEzUTQ4MFRRMVBIOVpXSTBGUi4u</a></p> <p><b>Young People rights and reporting procedures -</b>  <a href="https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/young-people/">https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/young-people/</a></p>	<p>Necessary links to IRFU policy are displayed within CSS</p> <p>Spirit Officers deliver training regularly</p>
<p><b>Risk of harm when using facilities</b></p> <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If hiring facilities has the squad / club</li> </ul>		<p><b>Facilities Information -</b>  <a href="https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/medical/">https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/medical/</a></p>	

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<p>checked that appropriate safeguarding procedures have been put in place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-bullying statement is made available to all for display and distribution to children and parents at camps, etc.</li> <li>• Appropriate medical procedures are in place at the facility</li> </ul>		<p>Coach/club member hiring facility to request CSS and/or safeguarding policy, along with anti-bullying statement and CWO ID templates</p> <p><a href="https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/medical/">https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/medical/</a></p>	
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Risk Identified: General	Level	Procedures in Place	Monitoring
<p><b>Risk of untrained people working with young people</b></p> <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding personnel completed all Sport Ireland / SNI safeguarding training and other necessary staff and volunteers received appropriate safeguarding training as per IRFU training factsheet</li> <li>• Risk of harm (physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect) of a child by a staff/volunteer/child if coaches are not trained</li> <li>• Coaches completed safeguarding training presentation with Spirit Officer and/or SG1</li> <li>• Coaches working with Age-grade squads are appropriately trained for the level of rugby they are coaching</li> </ul>		<p><b>Training Policy,</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/training/">https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/training/</a></p> <p>Spirit staff send out link to online training</p> <p>CWO to link with Spirit of Rugby Officer for course facilitation of face to face module after coaches have completed first 2 modules on Gainline</p>	<p>Coaches training recorded in Gainline and Rugby Connect</p>

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